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# TRANSLATORS' NOTE

In the original edition of this work most of the literature cited was translated into Italian directly by Professor Losurdo himself. Only rarely, he notes, were the Italian translations consulted and modified for coherency within the text. Given this, and given the range of the literature cited, it has not proven feasible to undertake the bibliographical task of tracing English translations of works originating in other languages and locating the passages quoted by Professor Losurdo. For this reason, we have retained the author's references to German, French, and Italian works, for example, but have, as far as possible, cited the English editions of works originally written in that language. Where the standard English translations were consulted, bibliographical information has been included.

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Jon and Marella Morris

*ONE*

# A "GREAT AND WONDERFUL WAR"

## 1. THE *GEMEINSCHAFT* AND THE "SOCIALISM OF WAR"

The outbreak of the First World War was perceived by more than just a few European intellectuals as the confirmation of the irreversible crisis, not only of historical materialism, but of every "unilateral, naturalistic way of thinking and feeling" as well—the expression, we will see, is Husserl's. In the presence of this conflict, considered by a large political press to be a clash of opposed ideals and world visions, even as a religious and holy war, a *Glaubenskrieg*,[1] the economic and material approach to the historical world was revealing its bankruptcy. What point was there in continuing to speak of class struggle when faced with a conflict that seemed to transcend every material dimension? What were mere material interests when faced with a war that seemed to demonstrate the superiority of the spiritual over the economical, and how relevant could those material interests be in the presence of a national community wonderfully and intimately united in the hour of danger?

Such experiences more often than not stray into the mystical. Stefan Zweig provides a very powerful description of the atmosphere in Vienna immediately preceding the outbreak of the war:

> As never before, thousands—hundreds of thousands—felt what they should have felt in peacetime; that they belonged to a great nation. . . . Each one was called upon to cast his infinitesimal self into the glowing mass, and there to be purified of all selfishness. All differences of class,

> religion and language were washed away by the great feeling of fraternity. . . . Each individual experienced an exaltation of his ego; he was no longer the isolated person of former times; he felt incorporated into the mass, he was a part of the people, and his person, his hitherto unnoticed person had been given meaning.[2]

At this point, we are still far from the atmosphere of Western or European decline that will later emerge: Under the spell of the first days or months of the war, what declined was every banausic or prosaic vision of the world. Such visions were incapable of comprehending and enjoying the extraordinary sensation of unity and spiritual fulfillment experienced by the individual nations of the West as they engaged in mortal combat with one another.

Even for Max Weber, who is, of course, far from the most rarefied or restless spiritualism, there is no sense in trying to explain the war in terms of a clash of opposed "economic interests." Naturally, "power interests" are at stake, but they are far from being reducible to the economic sphere, and instead reveal a profound cultural and spiritual dimension. And anyway, at least as far as Germany is concerned, she enters the war—even at the risk of losing it—following the voice of "destiny," to defend her "honor."[3] Meager economic bookkeeping can perhaps explain the goals of the French, but "anyone among us with such an objective in war would not be German; *German existence, not profit, is our goal in war.*"[4] More than ever, war becomes "truly great and wonderful beyond all expectations." *Groß und wunderbar*: it is an expression that continuously recurs. Such is war, according to Weber, regardless of its final outcome.[5] In addition to Germany's power, other values are at stake as well, higher ones. To understand them, it is worth quoting Marianne Weber, who describes her husband's experience as the director of a military hospital in the Heidelberg district. He was to assist and care for those who "gave themselves without reserve to the Whole [*dem Ganzen*]." And in carrying out this task a harmonious, unprecedented unity is established:

> In those marvelous first months all inner life was reduced to its simple, shared outlines and everything unimportant crumbled away. Everyone was full of goodwill and each day brought action and tension. Personal considerations were suspended in the overpersonal [*Das Persönliche ist aufgehoben im Überpersönlichen*]. It was the acme of existence [*Dasein*].[6]

It is an extraordinary experience that involves the entire German nation, molding it into a sort of mystical collective body. The outbreak of the war marks

> the hour of *depersonalization* [*Entselbstung*], and of integration into the community [*gemeinsame Entrückung in das Ganze*]. An ardent love of community [*Gemeinschaft*] spread among people, and they felt bound by flesh and blood to one another. Having formed a brotherhood, they were ready to destroy their individual identities through their service.[7]

It is the language of a mystical experience, an experience that Marianne Weber recalls with emotion years later, despite the disappearance of the mystical body of the German nation (which occurs even before the military collapse).

The mystical echoes in Max Scheler as well ("No longer are we what we had been for so long: alone"),[8] and in one of Husserl's letters, though only as translated by its American receiver. Once again, what is celebrated is the unity forged at the outbreak of the war, the highest expression of which is found in the military community at the front:

> The belief that one's death signifies a voluntary sacrifice, bestows sublime dignity and elevates the individual's suffering to a sphere which is beyond each individuality. We can no longer live as private people. The life of the entire nation is concentrated in each person's experience, and this bestows upon every experience its tremendous momentum. All of the tensions, endeavors, afflictions, and passionate aspirations; all of the conquests, and the deaths of the soldiers on the battlefield—all this enters collectively into the feelings and sufferings of each and every one of us.[9]

This pathos, of the community as well as of the Whole, is not at all limited to German or Germanic culture. War, at least in its initial phase, is perceived as an "instrument for abolishing the class structure"[10] in other countries as well. The very same objective requirements necessary to organize a war lead to a sort of "socialism of war," even in the traditional homeland of liberalism.[11] This is how an American observer (Edith Wharton) describes the atmosphere in Paris at the end of July 1914: "Only two days ago . . . [Parisians] . . . had been leading a thousand different lives, indifferent or antagonistic to one another, as alien as enemies on opposite sides of a border. . . . Now . . . [they are] . . .

bumping up against each other in an instinctive national community," a community that involves and fuses into an organic whole even those who, just days before, were considered—and indeed were—the "dangerous classes."[12] At least in the initial phase of the war, death and sacrifice seem to further unite this wonderful national community: "Countless simple people had never before experienced as much love as they did there," in the military hospital. This time, the observation is Marianne Weber's,[13] who many years before had juxtaposed the socialism of Johann Fichte to that of Karl Marx. Whereas the latter was said to be incapable of feeling "*the freedom and unity of our nation*," the former was imbued throughout with a sense of community and national "totality" (*Gesamtheit*), and by a vision of the state not as the instrument of class oppression, but rather as the "indispensable guardian of the relationship to the community [*Gemeinschaftsverhältnis*]."[14] The war seems to mark the triumph of this community, and of this spiritual wealth, over the Marxist "materialism" that Marianne Weber had branded as early as 1900 as a form of "dogmatism."[15]

A central element of the *Kriegsideologie*, a term coined by Thomas Mann,[16] has already begun to emerge. In 1928, Mann would move away from the "ideology of war" to which he had contributed ten years earlier with his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*. Distancing himself from this earlier view, Mann would declare Marx himself the most radical critic of the "idea of community" (*Gemeinschaftsidee*), which in Germany is loaded with "folk-romantic" (*volksromantisch*) or *völkisch* motifs, and to which the most radical antithesis is represented by the "socialist idea of society" (*Gesellschaftsidee*)[17] (here socialism is synonymous with Marxism).

By opposing the "idea of community" to the "socialist idea of society," Thomas Mann was clearly referring to the distinction posited by Ferdinand Tönnies between *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. This distinction, or juxtaposition, received a welcome reception in Germany during the First World War, and was sanctified by Max Scheler. Scheler, while formulating the "table of English categories of philosophy," accused the English of confusing, among others, *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*.[18] At this point in time it is clear that while *Gemeinschaft* refers to Germany, *Gesellschaft* refers to her enemies. This, then, is how the triumph of the "community" forged by war comes to be seen in many areas of the arts, by the political press, and according to German public opinion: as the undoing both of Marxism and of the "ideas of 1789," which would be superseded by the "ideas of 1914."[19] "The

socialism of the State and of the nation"—an expression that will be used by Benedetto Croce—triumphs not only over Marxist socialism, but over liberalism and democracy as well. What seems to crystallize, aside from the events of the war, is the opposition between a "community" heavily imbued—as Mann observes—with "aristocratic" and "ritual" (*kultisch*) elements, and a "society" not only democratic, but above all profane. This latter society finds its most fulfilling and most repugnant expression in Marxist socialism, which, even more than liberalism and democracy, is alien to the authentic German national spirit.[20]

## 2. The "Ideology of War" Outside of Germany

In order to avoid a possible misunderstanding, we should make it clear that the "ideology of war" does not develop and rage only in Germany. We hinted at the atmosphere of unity and the general call for action seen in France and in England. To elucidate matters, however, it is necessary to examine more closely, for example, Italy, and to analyze the works of not minor authors, but some of the leading philosophers of the twentieth century. During the war years, Benedetto Croce radicalizes his criticism of the ". . . seductions . . . of the goddesses of Justice and Humanity"; he also attacks the "antihistoric, democratic dullness, typical of the doctrine of natural law: the so-called ideals of '89."[21] Even Croce, then, participates in the campaign against those "ideals of 1789" that were the favorite target of the German *Kriegsideologie*. He, too, seems to contrast the "ideals of 1789" to the ideal of a more intimately and organically united community, forged upon the shared experience of danger and war. In other words, Croce affirms what in Germany was defined and celebrated as "the ideas of 1914." Even before this date, but with eyes already on the war in Libya, he had complained about the fact that the Marxist-inspired socialist movement had undermined the "consciousness of *social unity*." The result had been a "general decline in the idea of *social discipline*": individuals no longer felt tied to a greater whole or part of a grand union, subjected to it, cooperating and achieving a sense of self-worth through their work within the group."[22]

Some years later (Italy had not yet entered the war) Croce looks on with admiration and perhaps even a bit of envy at the spectacle of German national unity. Enthusiasm and patriotism had swept all,

washing away forever—this is the general feeling—every trace of social conflict, and the class struggle so dear to Marx. Croce sees Germany, the country in which the patriotic integration of the socialist movement seems to have been carried out most profoundly and unconditionally, as a model with a future that goes well beyond the contingency of war.

> You see—Croce writes to a friend on December 22, 1914—I was once empassioned by the socialism of Marx, and then by the syndicalistic socialism of Sorel; I hoped that through one or the other the regeneration of the present social life would come about, and both times I saw that ideal of work and justice dissolve and fade away. But now my hope has been rekindled by the possibility of a proletariat movement firmly based upon historical tradition, a socialism of the State and of the nation. And I am convinced that what the demagogues of France, England and Italy (who open the way not to the proletariat and to the working class but rather to the *noceurs*, as my esteemed friend Sorel calls them) will not be able to do, or will do poorly and eventually fail at, will perhaps be achieved by Germany, setting an example for all other people. Therefore, I judge what the Germans have done very differently from Italian socialists, and I believe that those socialists who felt as one with the German state and with its iron discipline will truly pave the way to the future of their class.[23]

A "Socialism of the State and of the nation," forged upon the experience of military discipline and of war: this category so dear to Croce is reminiscent of similar ones that were in vogue in Germany at the time: "state socialism," "National Socialism," and the "socialism of war." The latter two refer back to Johann Plenge, who, even by way of the title of one of his books, was one of the principal figures involved in the juxtaposition of the "ideas of 1914" to the "ideas of 1789."[24] Still, other expressions in Croce's letter (cited above) merit further consideration. "Regeneration of the present social life": more is expected of the war than just military victory and some advantages in international politics. And "historical tradition": war and danger stimulate an anxious search for, and veneration of, one's roots in an organic community christened by conflict (we'll see later the decisive role that the theme of "historicity," which bears an analogous meaning to "historical tradition," has in German *Kriegsideologie*).

Not only in Germany, therefore, but in all of the warring nations, even in the most liberal ones, the unceasing call to action favors or renders inevitable the falling back upon a communal ideology able to

demand or to justify the unconditional sacrifice of millions of people. As incorrigible pacifists or Marxists, Italian socialists, according to Croce, are guilty of remaining outside this atmosphere and of refusing to participate in the general jubilation for the announced conquest of Gorizia (for which so much blood was shed). Among other things, they are accused of "moral insensitivity" and of "spiritual blindness and narrow-mindedness." Excluding themselves from a national community that is at the same time moral, spiritual, and historical, the Italian socialists forget that "now as in the past, history places the nation, the defense of the nation, and the glory of the nation, above all else. Only then can one consider the contrasts among political parties and social classes."[25] In 1928, ten years after the end of the war and six years after the fascists' rise to power, Croce, though by now in opposition to the regime, still continues to criticize the Italian socialists for the fact that at the time of the conflict "they placed other ideals above and against their country," and so "ideally they removed themselves from the people they belonged to." Croce still passionately recalls the "national harmony" or the "common and national sentiment" that had presided over Italy's entrance into that "melting pot" which is war.[26] It is appropriate to reflect upon this last metaphor: War is seen as a re-fusion of individuals into the whole of the community or "people."

One can well understand then, why, in 1916 Antonio Gramsci accuses Croce of having "a territorial idea of the motherland, of the nation." It is an idea that somehow recalls Maurice Barrès, the relentless enemy of *déracinement* and of *déracinés*,[27] of the uprooting which constitutes another favorite target of German culture, especially during the First World War. The expression "territorial idea" also merits attention. What we are dealing with is the cult of native territory since, as Gramsci observes, in time of war the territory and its borders become "a living thing, that bleeds."[28] This cult is an important part of the "blood and soil" ideology that is spreading throughout Germany. Certainly, Croce is worlds away from this ideology, primarily because of his idealistic education, which immunizes him to a great extent from the tendency to naturalize history. And yet, despite the bitterness between Croce and Gramsci, their dispute calls attention to the similarities in the ideological development of diverse and opposed countries at war.

Even more drastic is the tribute paid to *Kriegsideologie* by Giovanni Gentile who, not by chance, as early as 1914, holds a conference on the "Philosophy of War." He not only applauds the newfound community,

the "blood line" that ties and embraces all of its citizens together, but he also defines and exalts war as an "absolute act": "through pain the human soul is purified and rises to its destiny," grasping the authentic "spiritual reality [that] is not stagnant water, but a burning flame."[29]

These themes recall those largely present in German culture. Such analogies, however, must not be generalized or exaggerated. The differences between them are even more notable, and not only because of the varying importance attributed to the exaltation of *Gemeinschaft*, which in Germany has a much longer and established history behind it that takes on particularly disturbing connotations. There is another, more important difference. Croce, despite his commitment to promote Italian patriotism, refuses to ideologize war in any way, and instead limits himself to considering it an expression of the struggle between different and opposed vital forces and wills to power. In France, on the other hand, the war is propagated, by a huge lineup of intellectuals among others, as a sort of crusade for democracy and for the ideals of the French Revolution. As for Germany, there are many different justifications for the war: some of them, inspired by Friedrich Nietzsche, exalt the will to power; others highlight the necessity to defend or affirm national honor, autonomy and dignity, and the cultural and material interests of the country. Along with these, we find another theme, which bears notable significance: the juxtaposition of the spiritual transfiguration of the war and of the proximity of death to the banality, spiritual poverty, and philistinism characteristic of everyday life.

## 3. WAR AND *MEDITATIO MORTIS*

It is not only because of the experience of "community" that the First World War, at least in its beginning, appears "great and wonderful" to so many people, to intellectuals and renowned intellectuals so different from each other, and even to Max Weber himself. Weber bewails the fact that he cannot personally experience life at the front, especially since he considers himself—so he writes to his mother—the one "most endowed with a warlike spirit among your children." Despite its tragedies and horrors, "this war is worth living through; it would be even better to participate in it, but unfortunately I am of no use on the battlefield." And yet, even a more or less bureaucratic job in a military hospital behind the lines allows him to participate in the richness and spiritual fullness of the moment: "Even

here, life still produces many new things that make it worth living."[30] Actually, the military hospital seems to be a privileged point for observation precisely because of the daily drama that unfolds there:

> Here we have proven that we are a great people of culture [*ein großes Kulturvolk*]: men who live right in the middle of a refined culture and then, outside of their natural environment, are able to rise and meet the horrors of war (it is certainly not a feat for a Negro from Senegal!) and yet return home with dignity, like the great majority of our people: this is what it means to be authentic men [*echtes Menschentums*].[31]

The experience and the tension of the war seem to even improve Weber's health. After a long, hard day at work, even the hours of rest and relaxation at home end up revolving around the theme of war. Marianne reports:

> Often, injured friends return from the front for some time and are our guests. They are the center of attention. They cannot stop telling stories. In every one of them, in fact, the events are mirrored in a different way; every one of them has a glow of happiness that comes from giving their lives and dedicating themselves to a high goal. The expression on those stern faces is magnificent. Some of them—still adolescents just a short time ago—in uniform now look more like men. For the most part the features of soldiers on leave appear strangely tense: they reveal a constant internal vigilance, severe responsibility and the experience of being close to death.[32]

Here, the theme of community, of "dedication to a higher goal," is fused with the idea of the formative, pedagogical efficacy of "being close to death." Certainly, it would be possible to trace signs of this theme in the war ideologies of the Entente Powers as well, but in German culture this idea would spread uniquely and take on a particular significance. One could almost say that proximity to death is now an integral part of authentic *Bildung*: A classic motif is revisited and reinterpreted in light of the war. Marianne Weber continues evoking the war years: "The first Christmas during the war was profoundly immersed in love, poetry and solemnity." Max Weber addresses some soldiers on leave, gathered around the Christmas tree:

> He knows that they have to return to the front. His voice is like the sound of an organ. He speaks of the greatness of death in battle. In

> everyday life, death comes to us incomprehensible, like a destiny contrary to reason, and out of which it is impossible to make any sense. We must simply endure it. But every one of you knows what he is dying for when he is struck by fate. Those who fall on the battlefield are the seeds of the future. Dying heroically for the liberty and honor of our people is the highest feat, and it serves as an example for our children and our children's children.[33]

This speech is only partially similar to the usual calls for sacrifice characteristic of the war rhetoric in every country. The battlefield becomes the privileged place to grasp the true meaning of life; the proximity of death impedes its usual repression, and is therefore able to endow human existence with a profoundness and an intensity otherwise unattainable.

These themes emerge even more clearly in a lecture given by Edmund Husserl in November of 1917, in which the influence of war on spiritual life is examined ("this war, this destiny of our German nation, great and severe beyond all imagination"):

> Ideas and ideals are again in motion, and again find an open heart to welcome them. The unilateral, naturalistic way of thinking and feeling loses its force. This critical situation and death [*Not und Tod*] are now our educators. For years now death has been nothing exceptional; you can no longer hide it behind pompous and solemn conventions, beneath piles of wreaths, falsifying it in its stern majesty. Death has once again regained its original sacred right. It is here again to remind one of eternity. And thus again we have developed organs to see German idealism.[34]

The war, then, seems to establish itself as an opportune, healthy and indispensable *meditatio mortis*; it is a sort of spiritual exercise, which allows one to escape from the banality and waste of daily life and to regain the true meaning of life.

This is also the opinion of Georg Simmel, and of Scheler. The former celebrates the "absolute situation" (*absolute Situation*) found in war (and in the proximity to death that comes with it). Beyond the banality of daily life, beyond the "compromise" and "point of view of quantity," this "absolute situation" demands an "absolute decision" (*absolute Entscheidung*), and reveals the power of "ideas" as "utmost urgency," even to those who "have never heeded or fathomed the word idea."[35] As for Scheler: "War reestablishes in our consciousness the true, realistic rela-

tionship between life and death." It puts an end to the blindness, or rather to the voluntary blindness, with which we face death, ending the "repression and concealment" that was carried out through "the deceptive veil of a vital praxis that had become a dull habit."[36] *Meditatio mortis* is once more the result of the "metaphysics of war" theorized by Scheler.[37]

But in confirmation of how deeply the theme of war as a *meditatio mortis* is rooted in German culture, we have recourse to Sigmund Freud: on the whole he was certainly far from the *Kriegsidcologie*, but in 1915 he wrote an essay profoundly influenced by the debate and the spirit of the time. It is an essay which is therefore appropriate to quote at length:

> We have an evident tendency to discard death, to eliminate it from life. We have tried to hush the thought of it. . . . We generally insist on the accidental cause of death: a disease, an infection, an accident, old age; and this reveals a tendency to transform death from a necessary fact to a chance event.

The repression of death brings about barrenness and sterility:

> Life is impoverished, loses interest if you cannot risk that which is the highest stake, that is, life itself. . . . The tendency to exclude death from the ledger of life has thus imposed upon us many other deprivations and exclusions. And yet, the Hanseatic motto went: *Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse!* It is necessary to sail the seas, it is not necessary to live!

War puts an end to this falsifying repression of spiritual life:

> It is clear that the war would sweep away this conventional way of considering death. Today death can no longer be denied; we are forced to believe in it. Men really die, and no longer one at a time, but in great numbers, often tens of thousands a day. It is no longer something by chance. . . . And life has become interesting again, it has rediscovered all of its content.[38]

Freud sees war as the moment of the destruction of artifice and the return to the authentic: "It eliminates the layers of sediment deposited in us by civilization and it allows the primitive man to reappear." It is a lesson not to forget. War does not allow itself to be eliminated. "The problem that we are now faced with is this: wouldn't it be better for us to give in, to resign ourselves to war. . . . Wouldn't it be preferable to restore death, in reality and in our mind, to its rightful place . . . ?" For

Freud there is no doubt: "*Si vis vitam, para mortem.* If you want to be able to endure life, be ready to accept death."[39]

Ludwig Wittgenstein is an exception. After enlisting as a volunteer at the outbreak of the war, he is immediately faced with the deepest disappointment. He feels himself surrounded by hate and overall "vulgarity"[40] (the working-class troops were drafted and felt no sympathy for the volunteers, mostly intellectuals from bourgeois families); he even contemplates suicide.[41] And yet, in Wittgenstein as well, contact with death seems to serve a purifying and pedagogical function: "Now I might have the possibility to be a decent person, because I find myself face-to-face with death."[42] And: "Maybe being close to death will bring me the light of life."[43] And finally: "Only death gives meaning to life."[44]

In turn, during the First World War, Thomas Mann highlights the "religious elevation, the deeper knowledge and nobility of the soul" which can develop from being "constantly, for years, close to death." Once again, we find the theme of death as an element of *Bildung*: "The poor wife of the warrior who comes back from the world will welcome a different man from the one she parted with." In this sense, the result of war can well be a "superior humanity" (*höhere Menschlichkeit*), an "elevation, a maturity, a nobilization of the human."[45] This net spiritual profit brings about an attitude toward death that excludes fear and repression. Despite its horrors, war can produce "*freedom*, freedom and religious serenity, a detached attitude toward life, and the ability to hover above fear and hope, which is undoubtedly the opposite of moral degradation, and thus, the overcoming of death."[46] It is within this same context that one can locate the theme of "sympathy with death" (*Sympathie mit dem Tode*), seen as "the formula and the fundamental resolution of every romanticism," or rather as "the *last word* of romanticism." Precisely because of this, sympathy for death is profoundly alien to Western *Zivilisation*, a civilization based completely on the superficial faith in "progress," "reason," and "happiness"; that is, founded upon the repression of the negative aspects of existence, and guilty, in the final analyis, of "treason to the Cross" (*Verrat am Kreuz*).[47]

In the *Kriegsideologie*, the *meditatio mortis* is a central theme: It is considered characteristic of the depth of the German soul, but alien to the superficiality of the West. A life that has removed the thought of death—observes Freud—"becomes empty, as insipid as an American flirt, in which it is clear from the very beginning that nothing must happen, as opposed to a European love affair, where the two are contin-

uously conscious of the serious consequences which they may face."[48] The intensity of the vital experience of war and its proximity to death is thus correlated to the intensity of a truly erotic experience. Even more significant, however, is that the repression of death, and life's consequent dullness, occurs outside of Europe. Explicit reference is made to America, but England is probably alluded to as well; regardless, both are contrasted to continental Europe, above all to Germany. For his part, Husserl sees the waning of the "unilateral and naturalistic way of thinking and feeling" (caused by war and by the experience of death), and the rebirth of "German idealism," particularly Fichte's, as happening concomitantly.[49] Likewise, Simmel, in attributing to war the merit of restoring the power of "ideas" to their original importance, recalls Kant: What reemerges is the juxtaposition of Germany to her enemies' materialism, naturalism, superficiality, and lack of any spiritual, metaphysical, or religious depth.[50] This theme will later find a cruder formulation in the antithesis, dear to Werner Sombart, between German "heroes," and primarily British "merchants."

In light of all this one can understand the judgement made of Germany by the French statesman Georges Clemenceau in the years between the two world wars:

> It is human nature to love life. Germans do not have this instinct. . . . On the contrary, they are imbued with a morbid, satanic nostalgia for death. How they love death, these people! Quivering, as if drunk, and with an ecstatic smile, they look upon death as a sort of divinity. . . . Even war for them is a pact with death.[51]

The image Germany creates of her soul and of her essence serves as an example even for her enemies, but with a reversed value judgment, of course. In both cases, either a real historical tendency, or the dominating ideology of a specific moment is petrified in a rigid national stereotype which leaves little leeway for exceptions and alterations. One should not forget, however, that this exaltation of war and of the proximity of death as a sort of spiritual exercise meets resistance even in Germany and within German-speaking cultures. Among the authors cited above, included are those who distance themselves from the positions expressed during the First World War. Wittgenstein does not even need to wait for the end of the conflict to realize that the war, far from representing a moment of spiritual development through *meditatio mortis*, really signifies "the complete victory of materialism and the waning of every sense

of good and evil."[52] It is a judgement that can be likened to the definition that György Lukács, applying one of Fichte's formulas, gives of his age: the epoch of "fulfilled sinfulness."[53] Lukács's definition (as well as Wittgenstein's) represents the most radical antithesis to the overwhelming veneration of war and the proximity of death in spiritual and edifying tones, despite the fact that this antithesis is itself formulated in a spiritualistic language. It is not by chance that Marianne Weber, who better represents the German intellectual position, reproaches Lukács for a sort of innate spiritual insensitivity to the "greatness" of war.[54]

## 4. SACRIFICE, DEATH, AND THE *GEMEINSCHAFT*

The fact remains that in Germany the "metaphysics of war"—to use Scheler's expression—manages to penetrate the most diverse cultural spheres; it appeals not only to the theme of "community," but also to that of "death." The intertwining of these two themes is analyzed with great clarity by Max Weber:

> *War*, as the realization of the threat of violence, creates in modern political communities a pathos, a sense of solidarity [*Gemeinschaftsgefühl*], which arouses a dedication and an unconditional community of sacrifice among combatants [*bedingungslose Opfergemeinschaft der Kämpfenden*]. . . . Moreover, war gives the warrior something concretely unique: a sense of the meaning and consecration of death, which belongs only to death in war. The military community on the battlefield sees itself, now as in the age of the ancient German community [*Gefolgschaft*], as a community until death [*Gemeinschaft bis zum Tode*]: the strongest community of its kind. Death on the battlefield distinguishes itself from what is but the common destiny among men, a destiny that touches everyone, making it impossible to say why it chose precisely that person and at that precise moment. . . . In contrast to that death which is merely an inevitable fact, here on the battlefield, and only here in such a massive degree, can the individual *think* he knows that he is dying "for" something.[55]

This analysis treasures the experience of the world conflict; it is not a criticism of the *Kriegsideologie*. Instead, when we read about the feeling that the war is able to bestow upon the death of an individual, we cannot help but think of Weber's words, uttered at Christmas in 1914, to the soldiers

who were about to return to the front. Certainly, in the text of the *Religionssoziologie*, what is highlighted is the sense that death in war is not the object of knowledge but rather the object of belief. But then Weber the politician, animated by nationalistic passion, can go well beyond the caution of Weber the scientist, who must remain faithful to value neutrality. And when Weber, in the same context, adds that war kindles a sense of solidarity with "those in need" that "breaks all the barriers of natural associations" (*naturgegebene Verbände*),[56] we cannot help but recall the above-mentioned observation made by Marianne Weber regarding the military hospital, where the soldiers and the injured people of the working class enjoyed more care and attention than they had ever experienced before.

The intertwining of the themes of "community" and of "death" produces in Germany a particularly turbid and explosive ideological mixture. In this context, the central figure is undoubtedly Ernst Jünger. In his works, the theme of the "proximity of death" is radicalized and reiterated in countless variations. The proximity to death makes life "more painful," but also "sweeter"; the "baptism of fire" becomes a true, bona fide celebration, a source of intoxication.[57] Without a doubt, life is richer, more intense, and more dazzling precisely where death is raging.[58]

Clemenceau's judgement becomes a clear, rigorous diagnosis when applied to Ernst Jünger: Death rises to the level of the divine, and the sacred rite acted out in its honor produces not only intoxication but also "ecstasy." "This condition, which is typical of great saints, poets, and lovers, is also accorded to the courageous"; the warrior is "made one with the whole, and races toward the dark doors of death like a bullet toward its target."[59] Participation in this sacred rite becomes the necessary prerequisite for participating in the authentic community. At the front, "*one* great destiny carries us on the same wave. For once we acted together as a single organism [*Organismus*] facing the hostile external world, men who, despite their little problems, sorrows and joys, were bound together by a higher goal."[60] The exaltation of the "ritualistic community" (*kultisch Gemeinschaft*), denounced by Thomas Mann after the war as the central element of the *Kriegsideologie*, clearly revolves around death,[61] sacrifice,[62] and blood. One can understand, then, why for the Jünger brothers this celebrated community is first of all a "war-like community,"[63] and this *kriegische Gemeinschaft*, in turn, tends to identify itself as a "community of blood" (*Blutgemeinschaft*),[64] a community christened by the blood spilt in war, and which easily, though not necessarily, takes on racial or racist connotations.

At this point, Nazism will inherit the *Kriegsideologie*. The Nazi rise to power in 1933 is regarded by more than a few representatives of the new regime, both militants and sympathizers, as a remake of the wonderful, communal experience of 1914: "Suddenly, everything that had divided the people (parties and unions) collapsed."[65] Didn't Wilhelm II, when the first world war broke out, declare that he no longer knew any parties but the German ones? The description of Adolf Hitler's rise to power thus continues:

> Everyone gathered close around that community, that party which they had seen struggle and win. We thus experienced that wonderful, unrestrainable gathering of all the members of the people around the community. It is perhaps the most sublime event of this age, the most powerful thing known to history. We see a people, who for centuries had been divided into different religions, into social classes, into farmers and city dwellers, rush to unite: now there are no more barriers, all of the walls collapse.[66]

This description immediately calls to mind similar ones from the summer of 1914, though now the ideological element is more evident. Every violent image has been removed. And yet, this was also the case with the magical descriptions of the outbreak of the First World War (certainly no mention was made of the punishments that the military code and martial law entailed for those who were deaf to the call of the "community"). In 1914, the experience of the *Gemeinschaft* had highlighted the superficiality and falsity not only of Marxism, but of every crudely materialistic and positivistic vision of the world. In 1933, at the "anti-German" book burning that follows the Nazi rise to power, the first slogan to be shouted is this: "Against class struggle and materialism, and in favor of the community and of an idealistic conception of life, I give the writings of Marx and Kautsky to the flames."[67]

The idealistic and spiritualistic transfiguration of this community reaches its climax with Sombart who, in 1934, notes that use of the term *Gemeinschaft* (coined by Tönnies) has become extraordinarily widespread since the war, despite its persistant ambiguity and "many meanings." He therefore decides to clarify any misunderstanding, declaring that he has opted for "the sense that *the word* has acquired *in the spiritual battles of our age*." That is, community is to be perceived as "a union . . . the ties of which have no external motives, no practical goals, no speculation, no rationality, and no earthly character, but are founded exclusively upon love."[68]

And yet, this sort of mystic community, strongly opposed not only to material interests, but also to "rationality," which is itself in turn considered susceptible to vulgar and "earthly" contaminations, is at the same time decisively warlike and based upon the *kriegerische Gemeinschaft* model. In 1934, Paul Joseph Goebbels hails the German soldiers as those who "brought back from the trenches a new way of thinking. During that time of terrible sacrifices and dangers, they experienced a new type of community, one which could never have been known in times of happiness"; from the experience of death, and of "equality" in the face of death, arises the solemn commitment not to tolerate, above all in "times of danger," a breach among the people.[69] Thanks to its intrinsic warlike nature, the "community of people" (or "socialism") identifies itself with "camaraderie": This is not only Goebbels's conclusion; it is also shared by another Nazi leader, Robert Ley, whom Sombart quotes and agrees with.[70] Nazism inherits, then, a key word from the *Kriegsideologie*. In fact, in 1936, a new expression is even coined, the "community of the front" (*Frontgemeinschaft*).[71] And this finds its foundation in the "spirit of the soldier of the front" (*Geist des Frontkämpfertums*) and in the "education of the front" (*Frontbildung*)[72] Every ambiguity, not only those raised by Sombart, is finally clarified.

## 5. The End of Bourgeois Security

We have thus seen the community configure itself as a warlike community. Here again is a new charge against *Gesellschaft*: It is seen as synonymous with the banal search for security and tranquillity typical of the bourgeois world (to which Marxism and the workers' movement are associated).[73] "In the humanitarian bourgeois society, struggle is something which should not exist, or at best something which requires a justification."[74] Sombart's favorite theme reemerges: the clash between "heroes" and "merchants." It is a theme that, though stripped of every vitalistic and warlike exaggeration, found an echo even in Thomas Mann during the war: "Mankind" would be incomplete if it were not for the figure of the "warrior" (*Krieger*), if the only choice were between "merchants and *literati*."[75] Condemned was the "bourgeois State of security, the welfare State" that presumed to banish the "terrible" (*das Furchtbare*) and "elementary" (*das Elementare*) aspects of life by establishing a "green, pastoral happiness," and thus "a safe, danger-free, comfortable,

and easy life" (*Sicherheit, Ungefährlichkeit, Behagen, Leichtigkeit des Lebens*).[76] Incidentally, already in Mann's 1918 text, some expressions are notably different from and even in opposition to those cited above (just consider the veneration of the *Bürgerlichkeit*, though it is in contrast to democratic politicization).[77] Still, during the years of the Weimar Republic, Thomas Mann distances himself from the *Kriegsideologie*, and vehemently criticizes the irrational rhetoric of that "way of life" that had contributed to Germany's plunge into the war.[78]

But this self-critical appraisal of the First World War hardly circulates in German intellectual circles. Like Sombart, Jünger too speaks about the disdain that the "born warrior," typically German, has for the "life of shopkeepers," a life based upon "security" and characteristic of the West, and of France in particular.[79] The "ideal of security"—urges Carl Schmitt—is typical "of the 19th century," and it expresses itself in the positivistic call to norms and in the consequent inability to face "existential crises" and exceptional situations.[80] The First World War, far from constituting a catastrophe or a mere passing incident, is hailed by Jünger as the end of the bourgeois era that presumed to establish "security" and banish "danger" (*das Gefährliche*).[81] Oswald Spengler expresses himself in similar terms a year later: The presumption or the illusion that the huge world conflict was "a temporary disturbance of comfort [*Behagen*]" is ridiculous. The petty security of the previous century is over. "The life of danger, real life in history, reappropriates its rights."[82] And Jünger states: "Danger . . . now dominates the present"; we witness a new "marriage of life and danger," while those who insist on looking back nostalgically at their lost security are part of the "defeated race."[83] By now the "utopia of bourgeois security"[84] has definitively been refuted, and the "invasion of the elementary into vital space" is irrevocable.[85] To use Spengler's expression, the "yearning for tranquillity" is a decadent sentiment, and it is profoundly alien to the "highest models" of mankind.[86]

Jünger goes as far as to make his famous assertion that "it is infinitely preferable to be criminal than to be bourgeois."[87] Having reached this point of radicalization, even this other motif of the *Kriegsideologie* (the rhetoric of living dangerously) is ready to be inherited by Nazism, all the more so since Jünger identifies the hideous Gesellschaft with the banal and philistine Weimar Republic which rose to power through the betrayal of the "German warrior."[88]

## 6. Obeying Destiny

The rhetoric of living dangerously culminates with the evocation of "destiny": For Spengler, *Schicksal* is the opposite of "causality" and of a rationality based upon causality, or upon clearcut categories. Therefore, destiny is perceived as the antithesis both of "mechanical thought" and of any rationality which presumes to be easily expressed or communicable or, even worse, reducible to a "calculation."[89] In this sense, destiny "does not allow itself to be defined," "it can only be lived"; it always entails a margin of "secrecy," inaccessible to scientific investigation. Above all, "destiny cannot be calculated."[90] The contrast between rationality and destiny is also present in Weber: "[D]estiny, certainly not 'science' dominates" over the rationally indeterminable struggles between contrasting values and world visions (for example, "between the value of German versus French *culture*").[91] Certainly, this juxtaposition lacks Spengler's irrational pathos. The fact remains that for Weber Germany entered the war disregarding any calculations as to the outcome of the conflict, but rather, as we all know, in order to defend her "honor" and to "obey her destiny."[92]

Thomas Mann's terms are almost the same with regard to obeying destiny: By involving herself "in the terrible struggle, temerarious and irrational in the most powerful sense of the word, a struggle against the civilization of the Entente powers," Germany gave proof of "her truly Germanic obedience to her destiny."[93] *Schicksal*, therefore, is also opposed to *Zivilisation* (which is identified with rationality and calculative thought). One can understand, then, why, at the beginning of the war, Thomas Mann opposes Voltaire and Frederick II, whom he sees as the respective symbols of France and Germany: the former as the representative of "dry clarity," and the latter as the representative of "destiny among the clouds."[94] Clearly, another key term of the *Kriegsideologie* has emerged. For Spengler, *Schicksal* is synonymous with the "*tragic* conception of life."[95] For Sombart, it is the merchants who are trying to expunge "destiny" from their lives, or to neutralize it through the grotesque attempt to make "business deals" with it.[96] Jünger uses similar terms: The time demands courage, and "having courage means rising to meet destiny."[97]

The word in question has many other meanings beyond the one already indicated, though they can only be hinted at here. As the war makes clear, it signifies the transcendence of the community beyond the

limits of the individual. With Ernst Jünger, we see the "*one* great destiny" that unites the soldiers of the front into an "organism." In 1916, Weber observes in more moderate terms: "Woman is rooted in the soil of German destiny [*deutsches Schicksal*], and her fate [*Geschick*], too, depends on how the war ends."[98] If Weber has the war situation foremost in mind, Jünger instead proceeds to make a general and radical contrast between those societies founded upon a "contractual and revocable relationship," and those founded upon "destiny" (*Schicksal*). The latter society's ties are indissoluble through life and death.[99] In this sense, the pathos of destiny is closely linked, not only to the pathos of death and danger, but also to that of the community. To deny the *Gemeinschaft*—writes Franz Böhm, one of the Third Reich's most noted ideologists—means to deny "common destiny" and a "sense of sacrifice."[100] Among the various meanings of the term "community," Sombart, quoting Grimm, mentions the "community of destiny."[101] One can better understand, then, why, according to Weber, the United States lacks "historic destiny," and why in Spengler's eyes, both the United States and the USSR lack "the authentically tragic historical element, the great destiny which for centuries has educated and deepened the soul of Western people," and above all the German people (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 5). For Spengler, moreover, *Zivilisation*, giving primacy to the city over the countryside, and consequently freeing itself from the "soil" (*Boden*) and becoming "rootless," marks the disappearance of "destiny" and the prevalence of mere "causality," that is, of calculative thought.[102] "Destiny" is the secular, millenarian saga of battles against danger and death carried out by a community united by an intimate ideal bond, and sometimes, in the most radical versions of this ideology, by an indissoluble tie to "soil," and even to "blood and soil."

Nazism inherits this brutal version of the *Kriegsideologie*'s conception of destiny. The most significant role of the "education of the front"—writes Ernst Krieck in 1934—is the perception of the "*völkisch* totality as destiny"; it is the people's "overpersonal, vital connection which emerges as the realm of their destiny."[103] Symptomatic is the fact that the bitter battle that develops in the Nazi camp between friends and adversaries of Heidegger revolves precisely around the category of "destiny," with the former group busy demonstrating how it is a central point in *Sein und Zeit*, and the latter, instead, denouncing its absence.[104]

## NOTES

1. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Gesinnungen* (München-Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1915), p. 3.

2. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat* and *Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 42–43.

3. Max Weber, *Deutschlands weltpolitische Lage* (October 27, 1916); and *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg: Schriften und Reden 1914–1918*, eds. W. J. Mommsen and G. Hübinger (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), pp. 341ff.

4. Max Weber, *An der Schwelle des dritten Kriegsjahres* (August 1, 1916); and *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg*, p. 334.

5. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, 1926), pp. 527, 530, 536.

6. Ibid., p. 529.

7. Ibid., p. 526.

8. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 43. Also in Max Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg" (1915), in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4, ed. Manfred S. Frings (Bern-München, 1982); cf. also Hanna Hafkesbrink, *Unknown Germany: An Inner Chronicle of the First World War Based on Letters and Diaries* (New Haven, 1948), p. 37.

9. The letter is now in Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921)*, *Husserliana*, vol. 25, eds. Thomas Nenon and Hans R. Sepp (Den Haag, 1987), p. 293.

10. George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 65.

11. Alan J. P. Taylor, *English History 1914–1945* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 95–97.

12. Leed, *No Man's Land*, p. 44.

13. Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 521.

14. Marianne Weber, "Fichtes Sozialismus und sein Verhältnis zur Marx'schen Doktrin" (1900), in Hans Lindau and Marianne Weber, *Schriften zu J. G. Fichtes Sozialphilosophie*, eds. Hans M. Baumgartner and Wilhelm G. Jacobs (Hildesheim, 1987), pp. 96, 100, 113, 115.

15. Ibid., p. 106n. 2.

16. Thomas Mann, "Kultur und Sozialismus" (1928), in *Essays*, vol. 2, ed. Hermann Kurzke (Frankfurt a.M., 1986), p. 96.

17. Ibid., pp. 99–101.

18. Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges," p. 249.

19. See Domenico Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel* (Milano: Guerini e associati, 1987), p. 39.

20. Mann, "Kultur und Sozialismus," pp. 98–100.

21. Benedetto Croce, *Materialismo storico ed economia marxista* (Bari, 1973), pp. xii–xiv.

22. Benedetto Croce, "Il partito come giudizio e pregiudizio" (1912) and "Fede e programmi" (1911), in *Cultura e vita morale*, 2d ed. (Bari, 1926), pp. 196, 163.

23. Benedetto Croce, *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1918: Pagine sulla guerra*, 3rd ed. (Bari, 1950), p. 22.

24. Johann Plenge, *1789 und 1914: Die symbolischen Jahre in der Geschichte des politischen Geistes* (Berlin, 1916); cf. Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania*, pp. 74–78, 105–108.

25. Benedetto Croce, "I socialisti e la patria" (1916), in *L'Italia dal 1914 al 1918*, p. 151.

26. Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Bari, 1967), pp. 261, 263, 268–71.

27. Antonio Gramsci, "L'idea territoriale" (1916), in *Cronache torinesi (1913–1917)*, ed. Sergio Caprioglio (Torino, 1980), p. 608.

28. Ibid.

29. Giovanni Gentile, "La filosofia della guerra" (1914), in *Guerra e fede*, *Opere*, vol. 43, 3rd ed., ed. Hervé A. Cavallera (Firenze, 1989), pp. 7, 13.

30. Weber, *Max Weber*, pp. 527, 530.

31. Ibid., p. 531.

32. Ibid., p. 534.

33. Ibid., p. 535.

34. Edmund Husserl, "Fichtes Menschheitsideal" (1917), in *Aufsätze un Vorträge (1911–1921)*, p. 269.

35. Georg Simmel, *Der Krieg und die geistigen Entscheidungen* (München-Leipzig, 1917), p. 20.

36. Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges," p. 82.

37. Ibid., p. 79.

38. Sigmund Freud, "Zeitgemässes über Krieg und Tod" (1915), in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 10, 5th ed. (Frankfurt a.M., 1969), pp. 341–43.

39. Ibid., p. 147.

40. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Diari segreti*, ed. Fabrizio Funtò (Roma-Bari, 1987), pp. 111, 118.

41. Ibid., p. 109.

42. Ibid., p. 58.

43. Ibid., pp. 112ff.

44. Ibid., p. 114.

45. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, ed. Hanno Helbling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), pp. 452ff.

46. Ibid., p. 450.

47. Ibid., pp. 415–19. As Thomas Mann himself observes in these pages, the theme of "sympathy towards death" is a "constitutive theme" in the *Der Zauberberg* which will be, incidentally, completed and published only after the end of the war (cf. "Der Zauberberg," in *Gesammelte Werke in zwölf Banden*,

vol. 3 (Frankfurt a.M., 1960), p. 906. Cf. also "Palestrina" (1917), in *Essays*, vol. 3, pp. 56–58.

48. Freud, "Zeitgemässes," p. 138.

49. Husserl, "Fichtes Menschheitsideal," p. 269.

50. Simmel, *Der Krieg und die geistigen Entscheidungen*, p. 20.

51. Georges Clemenceau, *Weitere Unterhaltungen Clemenceaus mit J. Martet* (Berlin, 1930), pp. 54ff. (reprinted in Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* [Stuttgart, 1986], p. 141n. 13).

52. A letter to his sister Hermine dated April 12, 1917, and reprinted in Michael Nedo and Michelle Ranchetti, eds., *Wittgenstein: Sein Leben in Bildern und Texten* (Frankfurt a.M., 1983), p. 135. This letter was discussed by Italo Valent, *Invito al pensiero di Ludwig Wittgenstein* (Milano, 1989), pp. 17ff.

53. It is the definition that concludes *Theorie des Romans*, first published in 1916 in a magazine, and then, in 1920, in book form. Later, recalling his own book and epoch, Lukács will observe: "The epoch of Fichte's fulfilled sinfulness means that Europe, from that apparent stability in which people had been living up to 1914, has fallen to where it is now." György Lukács, *Gelebtes Denken: Eine Autobiographie im Dialog Redaktion István Eörsi* (Frankfurt a.M., 1981), p. 77. Interview by István Eörsi contained in the Italian translation of the book, *Pensiero vissuto. Autobiografia in forma di dialogo*, ed. A. Scarponi (Rome, 1983), p. 59.

54. Lukács, *Gelebtes Denken*, p. 70.

55. Max Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie* (Tübingen, 1927), p. 548. Cf. Eduard Baumgarten, ed., *Max Weber: Werk und Person. Dokumente* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 473, 668.

56. Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, p. 548.

57. Ernst Jünger, "Feuer und Blut" (1925), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1978), p. 444.

58. Ernst Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis" (1922), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 36.

59. Ibid., p. 54.

60. Ibid., p. 85.

61. The battle with death is the "authentic virile baptism": cf. Ernst Jünger, "Kriegsausbruch 1914" (1934), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, p. 544.

62. The "community of the people" runs parallel with the "willingness to sacrifice"; cf. Hans Heyse, *Idee und Existenz* (Hamburg, 1935), p. 301; on the figure of this influential ideologist of Nazism, cf. Löwith, *Mein Leben*, pp. 51, 85ff., 142n. 18; Ernst Nolte, "Philosophie und Nationalsozialismus," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, eds. Annemarie Gehtmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), pp. 338–56.

63. Jünger, "Feuer und Blut," p. 452.

64. The expression comes from Friedrich Georg Jünger (Ernst's brother): cf. *Der Aufmarsch des Nationalismus* (Leipzig, 1926), p. 21 (reprinted in Kurt

Sontheimer, *Antidemokratische Denken in der Weimarer Republik* [München, 1968], p. 57).

65. Thus it was reported by Robert Ley (the head of the unions of the regime), and printed in Léon Poliakov and Joseph Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker* (München, 1978), p. 17.

66. Ibid.

67. Ibid., p. 121.

68. Werner Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 237ff.

69. Paul J. Goebbels, *Wesen und Gestalt des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 14, 21.

70. Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus*, p. 51.

71. Cf. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, p. 202.

72. Ernst Krieck, *Die deutsche Staatsidee*, 2d ed. (Leipzig, 1934), pp. 1, 3.

73. Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Stuttgart: Bibliothek der Moderne, 1982), pp. 19, 26ff.

74. Alfred Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig, 1931), p. 65.

75. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 456.

76. Ibid., pp. 455ff., 484.

77. Ibid., pp. 94ff.

78. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Ansprache: Ein Appell an die Vernunft" (1930), in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 115.

79. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, pp. 55, 57n.

80. Carl Schmitt, "Die Lage der europäischen Rechtswissenschaft" (1943–44), in *Verfassungsrechtliche Aufsätze*, 3rd ed. (Berlin, 1985), pp. 421, 419.

81. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 19.

82. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (München, 1933), pp. 11ff.

83. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 58.

84. Ibid., p. 266.

85. Ibid., p. 160.

86. Oswald Spengler, *Der Mensch und die Technik: Beitrag zu einer Philosophie des Lebens* (München, 1971), pp. 24, 40.

87. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 27.

88. Ibid., p. 26; even for Schmitt in 1934, the collapse of Germany in the First World War and the birth of the Weimar Republic coincides with the defeat of the "soldier" by the "bourgeois" (*Bürger*) who is imbued with the ideas of the enemy and is therefore, at least objectively, a traitor: cf. Carl Schmitt, *Staatsgefüge und Zusammenbruch des zweiten Reiches: Der Sieg des Bürgers über den Soldaten* (Hamburg, 1934), in particular, p. 42.

89. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (München, 1980), pp. 684, 153ff.

90. Oswald Spengler, *Urfragen: Fragmente aus dem Nachlaß*, eds. Anton M. Koktanek and Manfred Schröter (München, 1965), pp. 346–48.

91. Max Weber, "Die Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 6th ed., ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1985), p. 604.

92. Weber, *Deutschlands weltpolitische Lage*, p. 342.

93. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, p. 342.

94. Thomas Mann, "Gedanken im Kriege" (1914), in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 28.

95. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, pp. 12ff.

96. Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus*, p. 76.

97. Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis," p. 51.

98. Weber, *An der Schwelle des dritten Kriegsjahres*, p. 338.

99. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 25.

100. Franz Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 97ff.

101. Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus*, p. 237.

102. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, pp. 684, 154.

103. Krieck, *Die deutsche Staatsidee*, p. 3.

104. Cf. the text reprinted in Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger. Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962), pp. 225–28.

# TWO

# WAR, COMMUNITY, AND DEATH

## *Jaspers and Heidegger*

### 1. JASPERS AND THE *KRIEGSIDEOLOGIE*

We should now ask ourselves if and to what extent the central themes of the *Kriegsideologie* (community, death, danger, destiny), which were later radicalized and inherited by Nazism, are present also in the work of important twentieth-century philosophers such as Karl Jaspers and Heidegger. Let us start with Jaspers. In what is considered his main work, *Philosophie*, written in 1932, he explicitly exalts the "camaraderie that is created in war [and that] becomes *unconditional* loyalty."[1] He repeatedly insists on the "*loyalty to origins*,"[2] to "historicity": in order to realize one's authenticity, "the only possible way . . . is to truly exist in one's historicity," and therefore "in determined and irreplaceable relationships of loyalty."[3] A few decades later, Jaspers himself will point out the fact that he was educated under the banner of "loyalty and reverence for tradition."[4] But to return to the 1932 text: "I would betray myself if I betrayed others, if I wasn't determined to *unconditionally* accept my people, my parents, and my love, since it is to them that I owe myself."[5] "*Unconditional* loyalty" to one's community, to one's "people," to one's "historicity," is at the same time the acceptance of a common "destiny" (*Schicksal*): "I immerse myself in my determined historicity. . . . Trusting myself to my historicity, I perceive destiny not only externally but, in *amor fati*, as my own."[6]

By starting from the pathos of historicity, one can also understand the juxtaposition of "community" and "society," which, although not

explicitly formulated, is nonetheless clearly revealed by Jaspers's regret that, nowadays, "in place of man's common destiny" a link has emerged, determined exclusively by the "sociological machine," an external, superficial, and unstable link: "The general sociological situation is not the decisive factor in our destines, being, rather, that which threatens us with annihilation."[7] The uprooting of contemporary society can only be cured if the individual again feels "part of a community of people [*Volkgenosse*] which belongs to a historical totality." The individual must again immerse himself "in the substance of his historicity"; he must not lose but rather recuperate his tie to "tradition" and "origin," and reaffirm his "*will to destiny,*" (*Schicksalwille*)[8] a destiny that never regards him singularly, but rather as a member of the community [*Gemeinschaft*] *from one generation to the next.*"[9] Given these premises, it seems clear that war, at least to the extent that it entails a "historical decision" by putting the unique historicity and culture of a people at stake, becomes a privileged occasion for rediscovering "destiny" and the essential dimension of existence which contemporary uprooting threatens to eliminate. "War implies willingness to give one's life for one's faith in the unconditional value of one's own being; a firm conviction that it is better to die than to be a slave."[10]

The historicity that Jaspers never tires of exalting is always concrete and relative to a specific people, and also "absolute[11] and absolutely nontranscendable. It excludes the universality of values: "Truth, which by definition gives life to the community, is always a historical faith that can never be shared by everyone"; time and time again, "the spirit manifests itself as life tied to its origin."[12] An attempt to contrast "historical particularity . . . [to] human universality in the form of an ethos which, free from every historicity, could present itself anywhere as truth"[13] would mean falling into the emptiness of formalism. In reality—Jaspers seems to suggest—man does not exist as such, but "as an ever specific, irreplaceable essence."[14] Not by chance does the assault on historicity begin with the French Revolution,[15] that revolution which is permeated by the pathos of man as such. The desire to transcend historicity in its concreteness actually leads to the destruction of the authentic community, which is replaced by an "unhistorical community of the masses' destiny [*ungeschichtliche Schicksalsverbundenheit*]" in its exteriority.[16] In reality, faced with a historicity that is completely irreducible in its uniqueness, the transcendence of philosophical and political currents that profess universalism, as well as religious transcendence, reveal themselves as illu-

sory, given that the only way to access the divine "is to truly exist within one's historicity."

It is thus easy to understand why Christianity was criticized for its universalism, which was considered disruptive of the "deepest human relationships":

> At the time of the Franks' conquest, a Frisian chief, before being christened, asked if in this way he would meet his father and ancestors in heaven. They answered no, because as heathens, they could only be in hell. Taking a step backwards, he replied: "I want to be where my ancestors are." This answer expresses an existential choice and a primeval philosophical position that realizes itself in the world through specific and irreplaceable relationships of loyalty. In the case of a conflict, these relationships are not subordinate to specific religious objectivities established by men.[17]

This last observation highlights the fact that "loyalty" to one's people and to one's country must never be impaired by religious considerations or by submission to ecclesiastic authority. Such an observation can only be understood if one keeps in mind the accusations against the Catholic Church made in certain circles during the conflict, and in the years immediately following it. In 1924, Husserl himself complains about the overcondescendence which, according to him, manifested itself in Germany during the course of the war, with regard to the "Catholic internationalism."[18] Whether philosophical, political, or religious, internationalism is always regarded suspiciously by the *Kriegsideologie*.

Many other themes present in Jaspers are connected to the *Kriegsideologie*, for example the celebration of "struggle" (an insurmountable "borderline situation" that can even take on the form of war) as "an element that creates, produces and shapes men."[19] Not only is the ideal of "perpetual peace" unattainable, but its realization "*would nullify man's* very being."[20] Moreover, struggle and war are contrasted to the banal "tranquillity" of "philistine contentment" and "bourgeois self-justification" (*bürgerliche Selbstgerechtigkeit*).[21] It is within this recurring antiphilistine controversy that we can locate the tenderness with which Jaspers speaks about the duel. This institution had become the target of pacifist circles, or of those who were simply committed to tracing a critical appraisal of Germany's role during the First World War. And yet, the most chauvinistic or traditionalistic student groups supported, and would always support, this institution, and they will enthusiastically wel-

come the full rehabilitation of the duel by the Nazi regime.[22] But here is how Jaspers expresses himself in 1919:

> To conquer self-conscious, man must dare to put himself at stake. He exists for himself only if he accepts the risk of not being. In our age, one of the motives of the duel is to be sought in this state of mind, which, despite its primitiveness, always takes one back to one's roots, and without which the sublimated forms of spiritually self-conscious *Dasein* are suspended in air. Daring to put one's existence at stake gives to one's authentic self a new consciousness which is enthusiastically welcomed by the warrior torn between daring and retreating.[23]

The duel and war almost seem to appear as the main path to the conquest of authenticity: "The fact that man dares to put his life at stake becomes for him the only living proof—although, in its generality, only negative—that he is and is becoming a 'oneself.' In risking one's life, empirical existence is made relative and in this way an absolute, ideally a-temporal 'oneself' is achieved."[24]

Much later, Jaspers himself admits that the *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* was written "under the pressure and the critical atmosphere (*Not*) of the first [world] war."[25] Actually, the influence of the *Kriegsideologie* is undeniable, although it can still be perceived well beyond this work. Together with the exaltation of the "active heroism of risk," we find, again in 1932, the thesis according to which "the most authentic life is directed towards death," whereas "the most shallow life is reduced to anxiety when faced with death." Not only does "a higher life" form not fear death, but it may even crave it, not "for immediate or superficial reasons," of course, but rather to achieve in it "that accomplishment which no concept can grasp."[26] We saw how Weber exalted sacrifice in war as an act that could bestow meaning upon death and life itself. And in 1932 Jaspers, in honor of Weber, the man whom he considers his teacher, observes: "He had a profound veneration and respect for death in battle because through it man can give meaning to what we are otherwise forced to endure passively."[27] If Simmel exalts war and the proximity to death as the "absolute situation," Jaspers, instead, speaks of a "borderline situation" (*Grenzsituation*); the fact remains, however, that removal or distance from daily life and collective consciousness is also characteristic of borderline situations: "not everyone, only a very few, are able to look them in the face and experience them."[28]

What ends up emerging, though indirectly, are the national stereo-

types we already know: "our philosophizing"—Jaspers observes—incorporates "the state of mind of the Nordic heroic spirit."[29] In contrast to this, we find the criticism of liberalism as "a-metaphysical" and "blind to infinity," geared only to "that which is limited" and immersed in a world vision characterized by the mechanical conception of nature, as well as by the superstitious cult of progress and success.[30] This analysis seems to criticize not only liberalism, but those countries in which it had historically developed, that is, the Entente powers, Germany's enemies. On the other hand, we witness the condemnation of the contemporary world, a world devastated by "a horrid *leveling* process" and "characterized by superficiality, emptiness and indifference," and above all by the fact that "historical civilizations are uprooted and plunge into the technical, economical world and into shallow intellectualism." This condemnation makes explicit reference to the ruinous influence of "Anglo-Saxon positivism."[31] And therefore, according to a stereotype we already know, besides being "a-metaphysical," the Anglo-Saxon world involves the loss of historicity and roots; it is the world of technical, banausic standardization.

## 2. JASPERS AND THE COMING OF NAZISM

In contrast to the central themes of the *Kriegsideologie*, not only Germany's enemies, but the Weimar Republic as well, were tarnished by a repulsive banality and shallowness that aroused a treasonous accusation: "The State has become a mere servant to the masses, it has lost all ties to authentic destiny." Moreover: "The man of the State is no longer held accountable before God, but before the fickle masses."[32] To all of this we can add the apocalyptic tones of the Bolshevik Revolution and the threat that it entails for the Western world (cf. *infra*, chap. 3, § 7). At this point, we can well understand the recent assertion made by a historian, according to whom *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* and all of Jaspers's works, were in no way meant to dissuade the Germans from embracing Nazism.[33]

But Jaspers will never embrace the party or the regime. After the war, he will, as is certainly understandable, mark the beginning of his opposition to the regime with Hitler's coming to power. Historians, however, must proceed more cautiously and with a certain amount of skepticism. In 1932, Jaspers publishes an essay, dedicated to Weber, that, because of the publisher and the series in which it appears, as well as because of the subtitle that emphasizes "German essence," seems to fully share Weber's

nationalistic passion. The subtitle itself provokes some doubts and criticisms, even from a fond disciple of Jaspers's, Hannah Arendt.[34] Furthermore, Jaspers applies Weber's ideas to a very different situation, one that is already darkened by the shadow of Nazism's abrupt rise to power. And anyway, for Jaspers, there is no doubting that "German power" consists in "a universal-historical necessity," and that Germany was in no way able to avoid the war. She had been dragged into the conflict by the necessity to defend not only her independence, but also the "uniqueness" of her culture, which was threatened, on one hand, by "Anglo-Saxon conventions," and on the other, by the "Russian bureaucratic machine." The clash had been inevitable, and Germany's possible hesitation was not going to save her from involvement in the conflict. It was only going to deprive her—Jaspers here explicitly cites Weber—of the "consecration of a German war" carried out in order to safeguard her interests and above all to defend authentic German essence.[35]

Jaspers even seems to share Weber's harsh judgement on the November Revolution which had given birth to the Weimar Republic ("he speaks of the revolution as though it were a sort of narcotic"), and he does not even distance himself from the most chauvinistic statements ("the first Pole who dares to set foot in Gdansk will be shot").[36] Not by chance, the said writing, although criticized by Hannah Arendt, is greeted enthusiastically by Heidegger, who defines it as "great, beautiful, simple and clear." His enthusiasm is only shadowed by the suspicion that Jaspers might have excessively embellished, with regard to "German essence," an author, Weber, whom Heidegger declares he knows little of, but whom he more than distrusts,[37] since he considers him (cf. *infra*, chap. 2, § 7) indissolubly tied to the decrepit world of liberalism.

Even in January 1933, on the eve of the *Machtergreifung* (that is, on the eve of the Nazi Party's seizure of power), Jaspers, again following Weber's lead, expresses the wish that Germany will be able to "return to her ancient glory," even if within a "united Europe." And yet—Hannah Arendt objects—the desired union of Europe should take place "at all costs thanks to Germany's initiative." Jaspers's ambiguous relationship with the "movement" appropriated by the National Socialists finds its expression in this statement of 1933: "Our nationalistic youth have so much good will and genuine élan tangled up in their confused and wrong-headed jabbering."[38] We must not give too much significance to Jaspers's later statement, according to which the aim of his work on Weber had been to denounce, as much as possible, "the disaster caused

by insincere and barbaric policies."[39] Certainly, that work underscores the fact that the passionate champion of the German cause "despised anti-Semitism":[40] It is a sort of friendly warning to a movement which is otherwise regarded with sympathy and hope.

It is therefore hard to believe Jaspers's assertion that, as early as 1933, he felt as though "occupied by foreigners," and was hoping for liberation by the Western powers.[41] Indeed, in his 1932 text, Jaspers enthusiastically cites Weber, who thanked God for the fact that he was born German.[42] And in January of the following year, besides expressing the wish that Germany will be able to "return to her ancient glory," he is surprised by the fact that Hannah Arendt wants to "distinguish herself from German essence and stand out as a Jew." She identifies herself with Germany only with regards to her "mother language," "philosophy," and "poetry." Well, retorts Jaspers, "if you added your historico-political destiny to the list, there would no longer be any difference (between you and me)."[43] In suggesting that Hannah Arendt identify with Germany, Jaspers makes reference to two essential terms of the *Kriegsideologie*: "historicity" and "destiny." Yet, on the eve of the *Machtergreifung*, Hannah Arendt, being Jewish, has good reason to be uneasy and to avoid identifying with a country which would soon be dominated by irate, self-proclaimed anti-Semites.

Is it feasible to assume that, just a few weeks later, Jaspers will change his position so radically as to break all ties with "historicity" and "destiny," ties that he considered, not only politically but also philosophically, essential and vital? Is it possible that, in such a short time, Jaspers will come to desire Germany's defeat after having wished for her rebirth on the eve of Hitler's rise to power? In order to address these questions, it might be useful to consider Jaspers's attitude with regards to *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*. Heidegger's famous rectorial speech, put out by a publishing house that specialized in "militant National-Socialist literature,"[44] is immediately and vehemently attacked by anti-Nazi circles abroad. In Paris, the "Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung" immediately associates Heidegger with Nazi ideologists (cf. *infra*, chap. 2, § 6). Herbert Marcuse himself, who had once been a fervent admirer of the author of *Sein und Zeit*, does not hesitate to relegate Heidegger (whose "philosophical existentialism" is accused of having become strongly politicized) among those who support a heavily naturalistic reduction of historical and political reality. In support of his interpretation, Marcuse cites the passage in the speech that exalts the "forces

of the earth and of the blood."[45] Benedetto Croce is even more critical, defining Heidegger's text as "something stupid and obsequious"; his judgement seems to be shared for the most part by his interlocutor, the German Romanist Karl Vossler.[46]

Jaspers's position is quite different: Despite some reservations, he reconfirms his "faith" in Heidegger's philosophy, and expresses his approval of the reference to "ancient Hellenism." Or perhaps even more than approving, Jaspers is enthusiastic: Heidegger's rectorial speech is one that "will remain," and its author is compared not only to Nietzsche, but to a Nietzsche who will now succeed in translating his philosophy into reality. Undoubtedly, despite these acknowledgments, he expresses some reservations for the most *zeitgemäß* aspects of the speech, that is, those most linked to the present; but this does not really mean that he is trying to distance himself politically from Heidegger. Jaspers's remarks go well beyond praise for the author, referring somehow to the new regime as well, which has been chosen to carry out Nietzsche's and Heidegger's great ideas! Moreover, Jaspers expresses his agreement with the "aristocratic principle," and thus, with the *Führerprinzip*. This principle was already emerging in the universities of Baden and elsewhere in Germany, establishing a new academic hierarchy based upon the Reich's model of the relationship between the people and their Führer.[47] This is all the more significant given the fact that Heidegger had already informed Jaspers of his relationship or at least his contact with Alfred Baeumler and Krieck (the breach between them will occur later), and with the classicist Wolfgang Schadenwaldt, who had also sided with the regime.[48]

In said letter to Heidegger (see n. 47), Jaspers seems to want to offer above all his cooperation to the one who, in his opinion, is going to become a sort of *Praeceptor Germaniae*. He tells him about one of his books, which deals with the renovation of the university given the new political situation, and which includes several concessions to the new regime, beginning with support of the *Führerprinzip*.[49] Even the introduction of civil service and military education (*Arbeitsdienst und Wehrsport*) is hailed, with the argument that students must be "in contact with the principles of the *Dasein* of the people," that they must learn to "serve the Whole," assimilate "discipline," and have the necessary experience "of what may be more encompassing" (*des Übergreifenden*).[50] Even more important than his support for the new regime's measures is the theoretical justification of his position, which Jaspers ascribes to his own philosophy. And so, as late as the summer of 1933, the philosopher,

far from disagreeing with the Nazi regime, is strongly tempted to cooperate with it. Certainly, he is well aware of the obstacle presented by anti-Semitism, and yet he regards it not with indignation, but rather with disappointment and a bit of regret. He would like to send his theses to the new leaders, but he refrains from doing so: "I cannot do it if they do not ask me, since I have been told that, as I am not a member of the party and my wife is Jewish, I am only tolerated and cannot be trusted." At this point, rather than rejecting the regime, Jaspers laments the fact that he is being unjustly rejected by it. He writes to Heidegger in the secret hope that the latter will mediate a solution allowing him to respectfully enter the political debate regarding the university.[51]

It is true that, at the end of March 1933, having discussed Jaspers's latest book, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, with its author, Heidegger is profoundly disappointed: "I know now that it is possible to write about the 'spiritual situation of the time' without being touched by the actual events, and even without knowing anything about them."[52] Probably, Heidegger's disappointment stems from Jaspers's refusal to intervene directly in the political scene, and his disillusionment is perhaps even more bitter because the book *did* give rise to some hope. But although Jaspers is more removed from the regime than Heidegger, this does not imply a break or a separation from it, as can be confirmed by Jaspers's letter dated July 10, 1933, written only a few months after this meeting. It is Jaspers himself who, on another occasion, dates his philosophical break from the regime not from March of 1933, but from the following year. Even this date, however, must not be interpreted as the beginning of a radical separation: After all, according to Jaspers's memoirs, it was his elderly father who inspired the break.[53]

## 3. JASPERS AND THE COMMUNITY OF THE SOIL

It is a well-known fact that not even Jaspers's works after 1934 are free from ambiguity regarding the issue. In any case, there is no real change of position in *Vernunft und Existenz*, which was published in 1935. As in the past, the pathos of "historicity" recurs, and the "affirmation of a truth" as universally valid is made synonymous with "falseness" (*Unwahrhaftigkeit*).[54] Once more, what is stressed is that "historicity" cannot be transcended by the "universal concept," which is guilty of fal-

sifying philosophy, and of violating its indissoluble link to "concrete historicity." Historicity cannot be transcended by religion, either, since "atemporality" can only be grasped through the "temporality" of historicity.[55] Above all, Jaspers continues to insist on the "unconditional ties" that bind men together on the basis of a determined historicity.[56]

Thus, in *Vernunft und Existenz*, there is a clear theoretical justification for faithfulness or loyalty to one's country, regardless of the regime in power. This confirms the many doubts surrounding Jaspers's claim, made after 1945, that he had begun to hope for Germany's defeat the moment that Hitler came to power, or at least by 1934. If what he says were true, he would be guilty of violating the "unconditional tie" that he continues to discuss in 1935, and of forgetting or trampling upon the "truth of the soil" (*Wahrheit des Bodens*). He, too, would fall into a frame of mind with no ties to the soil (*Bodenlos*), "inauthentic" (*unecht*).[57] In reality, the pathos of historicity, which appears so often in Jaspers, is also the pathos of the *Gemeinschaft*, one of the *Kriegsideologie*'s beloved themes, inherited and radicalized by Nazism. Certainly, the community exalted by Jaspers lacks that racist component so dear to the new regime: It is, so to speak, a community of the soil, and not of the blood. And yet, Jaspers unhesitatingly condemns "the empty game of intellectualism," which separates thinking consciousness from the being, and annihilates or forgets the "responsibility to the being," which is, after all, "living *Dasein*" (*lebendiges Dasein*) in a concrete historical community. With regard to spiritual activity and science, one cannot speak of complete autonomy: "The will to know must not forget that it realizes itself as a science in the community of human *Dasein*, and the spirit must not forget that it is unconditionally dependent upon *Dasein*."[58] To shirk one's "responsibility" to *Dasein* and to the community means to stain onself with "*guilt before Dasein*" (*Schuld am Dasein*).[59]

With regard to this last point, Jaspers refers to the distinction between the ethics of responsibility and the ethics of conviction. Weber had already used this distinction to condemn as "irresponsible" the attitude of those pacifists who, by weakening Germany in front of her enemies, had eliminated any possibility of a peace agreement with no winners or losers. In other words, they had prevented the only outcome that might have discredited war in the future, and so now the long conflict would end with considerable advantages for the Entente Powers. Therefore, "for the winners—or at least some of the winners—the war had been politically profitable, this because of that pacifistic state of mind

which thwarted any resistance on our part. But then—when the time of discouragement is over—not war, but peace will be discredited as a consequence of absolute ethics," that is, of conviction. Conviction had been the cause of such ruin, the opposite of its good intentions, because it had insisted on ignoring the fundamental rule of the ethics of responsibility ("You must resist evil with violence, or you shall be responsible if it prevails").[60] It had thus sabotaged the "just war of defense" (*gerechte Kriegsnotwehr*)[61] characteristic of Germany's participation during the last phase of the conflict. In 1935, referring to the distinction made by Weber between the ethics of responsibility and the ethics of conviction, Jaspers observes that following the latter in the political world would mean "forcing my people to be the weakest with regards to Dasein, to be the impotent ones, those bound to be defeated [*Daseinschwächeren, Ohnmächtigen, Untergehenden*]."[62] Not only is there no wish for Germany's defeat and military occupation, but there is precise philosophical criticism of those who might wish for it.

Certainly, it would make no sense to attempt to reduce Jaspers's philosophy to the ideology of the Third Reich. In *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* one can even detect some criticism of "fascism" (which is itself somehow involved in the condemnation of modern standardization). Moreover, as Jaspers himself admits in a 1946 note,[63] this condemnation was directed only toward Italy. What remains then, is Jaspers's disagreement with the official ideology of Nazism, not only as far as anti-Semitism and racism are concerned, but also with regards to the rejection of the unconditional naturalization of "historicity." This naturalization is still significantly exalted by Jaspers, even during the years in which Heidegger refers to this category in order to clarify the link between his philosophical theories and his commitment to the Nazi regime (cf. *infra*, chap. 3, § 4). The fact is that, because of his strong connection to the motifs of the *Kriegsideologie*, Jaspers cannot split with or distance himself from the Third Reich, the inheritor of this ideology.

## 4. HEIDEGGER, CAMARADERIE, AND THE *GEMEINSCHAFT*

As far as Heidegger is concerned, the theme of "community," so central to the *Kriegsideologie*, is present throughout his rectorial period. The problem of time is located within the construction of an "authenti-

German community" (*echte deutsche Gemeinschaft*),[64] a "community of the people,"[65] an "authentic community of the people" (*wahre Volksgemeinschaft*).[66] It is a principle that should permeate every aspect of social life: Even the university must take on the shape of an "*educational community of life*" (*erzieherische Lebensgemeinschaft*).[67] In the lectures that he gives between 1934–35, not only is the idea of the "community" in opposition to "society" present, but it is linked to the theme of death as well. "The camaraderie of the soldiers at the front" is founded upon the fact that the "proximity to death as sacrifice placed everyone in the same void, so that this became the source of unconditional and reciprocal belonging [*unbedingtes Zueinandergehören*]." And so it is "death itself, the willingness to sacrifice one's life, which creates a space in the community for camaraderie."[68] It is significant that Heidegger, in exalting the *Gemeinschaft*, makes reference to the "philosophy of Fichte . . . according to which we are a unit raised together and intertwined, and as such no one single member's destiny is different from any other's."[69] Up to this point we are within the rhetorical and conceptual framework of the *Kriegsideologie*: This is true regarding the reference to Fichte as well, who, as we know, was cited by Heidegger's teacher, Husserl, during the war. Heidegger, however, seems quite receptive to the Nazi propaganda regarding family lines (a sign of newly found *Gemeinschaft*) between 1914 and 1933.[70] It should be added that Heidegger adopts this theme in its most radical form. So, not only does the community consist of "true camaraderie and authentic socialism,"[71] but it also seems to find its basis in the "forces of earth and blood" (*erd- und bluthaften Kräfte*),[72] though true biological racism is not part of Heidegger's philosophy.

As can be inferred from the reference to Fichte, the authentic community is defined by its indissoluble link to the destiny of its members. What constantly recurs is the pathos of "our people's destiny,"[73] of "German destiny."[74] The word is not used by chance; *Schicksal* is an "essential Germany word." It's true that Heidegger writes about Friedrich Hölderlin, and that he says he wants to recall the poet in his own work, but the term in question is loaded with political meanings even outside of Hölderlin's historical time period. "To be Führer is a destiny"—he emphasizes in his 1934–35 lecture, just after the *Machtergreifung*—and "destiny is the name for the demigods."[75] The link made between "destiny" on the one hand, and the Führer and "demigod" on the other, may seem haphazard, but there is a logic to it: Expressed or implied, it coincides with *Gemeinschaft*. The term destiny recalls the his-

torical community of the Volk, and "the demigods, the creators" are those who establish and save the *Gemeinschaft*.[76] Destiny means accepting responsibility for the problems and sufferings associated with "historical Being-with Others" (*geschichtliches Miteinandersein*),[77] a "Being-with Others" that, far from having a universal meaning, refers back to a determined community that cannot be transcended, a community with its own unique historicity and its own "land" (*Boden*). Destiny, then, implies a *Miteinandersein* that is "in and of itself historical, and therefore tied to the powers of history and determined [*gefügt*] by them."[78] In this sense, destiny is synonymous with singularity and uniqueness, and "this unique destiny is not considered a particular case of a general essence known as destiny; rather this uniqueness has its own *historical* essentiality." Yes, destiny in some way recalls essence or essentiality, but "only an intellectual or logical bias would maintain that essence must always be universal and generic [*gattungsmäßig*]."[79] Destiny is essence to the extent that it is a stable element throughout the ups and downs of a historical community; but, precisely for this reason, it is synonymous not with universality, but with irreducible uniqueness. The "authentic community of the people"—a more political text declares—keeps safely away from an "inconsistent and uninvolved universal brotherhood."[80]

## 5. THE PHILOSOPHER, THE "ABYSS OF *DASEIN*," AND "PRIMAL COURAGE"

Another theme central to the *Kriegsideologie*, the condemnation of security, is very much present in Heidegger's work. His 1929–30 lecture bitterly argues against the overall "satiated comfort in the absence of danger [*sattes Behagen in einer Gefahrlosigkeit*]," and against the "mediocre and philistine modern man" who presumes he can escape from the "dangerous part of existence." To this, Heidegger juxtaposes the necessity of something "able to instill terror [*Schrecken*] in our *Dasein*,"[81] a theme we are already well familiar with. In 1933, Spengler almost uses the same words as Heidegger: "The coveted life of peace and happiness, without danger [*ohne Gefahr*] and in pleasant comfort [*breites Behagen*], is boring, senile, and, though contemplatable, is not possible."[82]

Heidegger's criticism of security is at the same time a criticism of the ideal of happiness so dear to the mechanical and mediocre "last man"

denounced by Nietzsche.[83] It is a criticism of the ideal of the "happiness of the masses," typical of the overall banality in the modern world.[84] This too is a theme of the *Kriegsideologie*. We find it again in Thomas Mann, who, in 1918, denounces "utilitarian enlightenment and the philanthropy of happiness"—that is, the promise of "the most happiness possible, for the greatest number possible"—as the integral part of a contemptible *Zivilisation*. In reality, not only is such happiness unattainable, but there is something extremely repugnant about it: As opposed to authentic *Kultur*, it aspires to elevate the tranquil state of mind and the self-satisfying rumination of cows, to the level of an ideal model.[85] Criticism of the "most happiness for the greatest number" can be found in Sombart as well;[86] and Böhm not only criticizes this ideal of happiness, but refers it to Nietzsche's denunciation of the "last man."[87]

According to Heidegger, the philosopher must learn to despise the ideal of security, even with regards to theoretical activity. He must place himself "in the most dangerous position within the world's constant uncertainty,"[88] and embrace the "danger and hardship of human *Dasein*."[89] And so, in the same way that the theme of the community is made valid for the university, the theme of danger and the rejection of the banal tranquility of the philistine is applied to the figure of the philosopher. The authentic philosopher is removed from "comforting research [*behäbige Sucht*] and easy answers,"[90] as well as from the "tranquility of an occupation without danger [*das beruhigte Behagen einer gefahrlosen Beschäftigung*] set on promoting a mere progression of learning."[91] Heidegger is using the same words he used during his 1929–30 lecture to denounce the "mediocre and philistine modern man." And once more "comfort" is contrasted to the necessary experience of "terror." The authentic philosopher must not "cringe before the terror of the indomitable" (*Schrecken des Ungebändingten*) and the "chaos of obscurity." "To confront being" (*in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Seienden*) you must either "rise to its level, or be shattered by it."[92] Therefore, courage, "primal courage," is the vital element necessary to the authentic philosopher who must know how to interrogate, experiment, and overcome the "abyss of Dasein." When confronting danger, the philosopher or intellectual must demonstrate "clear harshness" (*klare Härte*)[93] or the "harshest clarity" (*härteste Klarheit*).[94] They are more or less the terms that Heidegger repeatedly uses in order to exalt the "young German hero," Schlageter: "harshness of will" (*Härte des Willens*) and "clarity of heart" (*Klarheit des Herzens*).[95]

It is a theme, a terminology, that continues well beyond Heidegger's rectorial period. Even later he reaffirms the idea that authentic philosophy and authentic poetry require "harshness" (*Härte*) and "determination."[96] In any case, the general idea that only through "danger can one reach that which is highest"[97] is still valid. In reality, the theme of the denunciation of "security" is so radical in Heidegger that it becomes the basis for interpreting the downfall of the West. The theme can only be hinted at here, but it begins with the reduction of "truth" to simple *Sicherheit*, a "will to ensure security."[98]

## 6. THE *FREISCHWEBEND* INTELLECTUAL: HEIDEGGER AS A CRITIC OF MANNHEIM

The exaltation of the intellectual's courage when faced with the "abyss of *Dasein*" goes hand in hand with the contrast of science rooted in the community of the people, that is of the *völkische Wissenschaft*, to "a state of mind without soil and power (*boden- und machtlos*)." This exaltation is also concomitant with the condemnation of those intellectuals who, hooked on "artificially constructed conceptual systems,"[99] think they can avoid the "harsh danger of human *Dasein*" and display indifference when confronted with the "critical situation (*Not*) of a people's historical *Dasein*."[100] It is here that the theorization and exaltation of the patriotic intellectual at the center of his community emerges. It is not by chance that as early as 1930 we see Heidegger begin to argue against "self-exhausting *freischwebend* speculation."[101] What is clearly criticized is the *freischwebend* (literally, floating in the air) intellectual theorized by Karl Mannheim in his recently published *Ideologie und Utopie*.[102] This type of intellectual is denounced, especially after 1933, by the propaganda of the regime, to include Hans Freyer. In 1936, Freyer, Heidegger, Hans Heyse, and others are sent to Rome in order to present the culture of the German Third Reich.[103] This propaganda juxtaposes to the uprooted intellectual, the Nazi political leader, above all the Führer, who has the merit of not being "*freischwebend* above the people."[104]

It is within this framework that one finds Heidegger's 1933 theories regarding mandatory "civil service and military education" (*Arbeitsdienst* and *Wehrdienst*), even for students and intellectuals. These obligations stem from being a "member" of the "community of the people," and from sharing the responsibility for the "honor and destiny [*Geschick*] of the

nation."[105] Gone are social and class differences: Every German is a member of the *Arbeiterstand*, which is "rooted within the framework of the people," that is, in "German *Dasein*" (*deutsches Dasein*), or even in "German Being" (*deutsches Sein*).[106] Intellectual activity has no autonomy: It is defined as being in the "service of knowledge" (*Wissensdienst*), and answers to the "spiritual mandate [*Auftrag*] of the German people," who are busy with the spiritual affirmation of their "destiny" (*Schicksal*).[107]

There have been attempts to separate Heidegger's rectorial texts from their political context and to regard them as pure philosophy.[108] After the war, Heidegger will try to justify himself by stating that "civil service" had "emerged well before 1933 as a result of the critical situation [*Not*], and of the will of the youth."[109] In effect, he recalls the "popular," patriotic community and the mobilization that begins with the First World War and the *Kriegsideologie*. It must be added to Heidegger's half-truth that these are themes and meanings that Nazism inherits, and which, in 1933, are found in a great deal of propaganda, to include Ernst Krieck's. Krieck will later become a bitter enemy of Heidegger, specifically with regard to *Sein und Zeit* Heidegger's and Krieck's propaganda is commented upon in the "Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung" (which has moved by this time to Paris). What is highlighted is their shared ambition to "substitute the humanistic university with a political *völkisch* one" imbued with a "militant and soldier-like science." The same reviewer emphasizes the influence exacted by Heidegger on other minor authors who reject the separation of knowledge from "*völkisch* knowledge." Notably, one of the articles reviewed relates the new university which emerges with the Nazi rise to power, to the "victory of the ideals of the front."[110]

## 7. Value Neutrality and Liberalism: Heidegger as a Critic of Weber

In highlighting the *Kriegsideologie's* enormous influence beyond the First World War, one must not, however, overlook the inherent contradictions in it. To that end, it is worth looking at Heidegger's 1919 lecture, where he observes at the beginning: "With regards to Anglo-American world vision and German world vision, there has been mention of antithesis."[111] Indeed, this was a recurring theme of the *Kriegsideologie*, but it was susceptible to different formulations. Sombart, we saw, had

interpreted the conflict as a war of opposed faiths that could not be mediated or transcended. At times, even Weber assimilates the clash between culture and value systems to the clash between divinities: "I don't know how one can scientifically decide the difference between the value of German culture and the value of French culture. Here, too, there is antagonism among different divinities, in every time period."[112] In the latter case, however, the antagonism regarding differing political and axiological options, or regarding differing worldviews, does not jeopardize the autonomy and objectivity of scientific knowledge. The conflict regarding diverse *Weltanschauungen* (world visions), although rationally undecidable, can still be scientifically transcended.

The solution of value neutrality does not seem to satisfy Heidegger, as is evident from his scathing review of Jaspers's *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*. In it, Heidegger highlights Weber's influence on Jaspers regarding the "distinction between scientific observation, and valuation based upon worldviews." This may be a useful distinction when the objects investigated are "objective economic processes and operations," but it can hardly be considered valid in the field of psychology, or in that of philosophy. "Jaspers is deceiving himself if he believes that through pure observation one is able to attain the highest degree of nonintervention in personal decisions."[113] Even though he rarely cites Weber,[114] and despite the fact that he says, in a 1932 letter to Jaspers, that he is not familiar enough with the author's works (cf. *infra*, chap. 2, § 2), Heidegger seems to constantly go up against Weber's theory of value neutrality. In 1937, Heidegger ultimately judges ridiculous those "intellectuals [*Gelehrte*] involved with philosophy who hold that the point of view of the absence of a point of view [*den Standpunkt der Standpunktfreiheit*] is not, in turn, a point of view." In reality, this is a grotesque attempt, to "flee from one's shadow."[115] What is most important is the political aspect of this criticism: "The concept of *Weltanschauung* springs up for the first time in the decades of 'liberalism.' Every *Weltanschauung* is, *in and of itself, liberal*."[116] That is, a philosophy is liberal because of the pluralism that is implicit in it, and because of the fact that it recalls a realm of scientific transcendence, in which "so-called liberal objectivity" attempts to lay down the law.[117] Heidegger makes no reference to a specific author here. However, his persistent antiliberal argument is revealing: In December of 1933, Heidegger expresses his disagreement with the ideas of a certain E. Baumgarten, whose "spiritual state of mind" recalls the "circle of liberal-democratic intellectuals from Heidelberg,

centered around Max Weber."[118] Weber seems to be considered the source of the persistent presence of objectively liberal motifs, even within the culture of the Third Reich.

In this light, one can well understand the argument against the philosophy of values[119] that is linked to the philosophy of world visions. Whether or not different *Weltanschauungen* and different values are considered expressions of a "people's soul" (*Volksseele*) or of a "race's soul" (*Rassenseele*), we are still in the presence of a typically "liberalistic" (*liberalistisch*) "way of thinking"; and "such a way of thinking is the fulfillment of the 'liberal' man's determined way of being."[120] In this sense, even Alfred Rosenberg (the theorist of the *Rassenseele*) can be considered to still be a prisoner, somehow, of liberalism, or of being unable to move conclusively beyond it. Liberalism is a school of thought, Heidegger notes in 1934–35, that, "in countless shapes and forms, has continued to dominate up to the present day."[121] At least on an ideological level then, the *Machtergreifung* had little impact, because there were Nazi ideologists who, ignorant of the *Machtergreifung's* "inner truth and greatness," continued to fish in "the torpid waters of 'values' and 'totality.' "[122]

In this way, Heidegger finds himself in opposition to a Nazi cultural current which, having inherited the *Kriegsideologie*, exalted its rise to power as a triumph of "the German vision of the world." Thus begins a notable integration of philosophy with *Weltanschauung*,[123] something unacceptable to Heidegger, who has higher ambitions. Heidegger wants to reread Western history, in all of its complexity, beginning with Ancient Greece and on through its falsification; and he wants to renovate a "primal" philosophy capable of questioning centuries and millennia of history (not only the history of Germany's enemies). This, in order to insure the salvation and regeneration of the West, the "sacred heart" of which is constituted by Germany.

With regard to the *Kriegsideologie*, Heidegger proceeds to problematize it on the one hand, and radicalize it on the other. He avoids questioning the national stereotypes that, beginning in 1914, had become ubiquitous and had even acquired a semblance of cultural dignity. For Heidegger, American culture continues to be synonymous with superficiality and standardization[124] as well as the "absence of historicity" (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 5). In fact, he is so tied to the stereotypes of the *Kriegsideologie* that, in 1942, he interprets the war as a decisive struggle between (German) "historicity" and "the absence of historicity" (in Germany's enemies).[125] The difference is that now criticism of Amer-

ican culture, "the American man" and "American pseudo-philosophy,"[126] is the point of departure for a ruthless rereading of Western history and modernity that questions the "modern man."[127] With regard to this rereading, Sombart's view, which interprets the war as a struggle between the heroic German *Weltanschauung* and the mercantile Anglo-saxon *Weltanschauung*, is, in and of itself, superficial. This is because it fails to take into account the influence of American culture and modernity in Germany,[128] the very country called upon—the only one that could be called upon—to regenerate the West. Above all, the discourse referring to the different *Weltanschauungen* reveals itself a victim of modernity, even when there is a mortal struggle between opposing world visions. For that reason, Weberian and Mannheimian discourses also fall victim to modernity, because they attempt to transcend this struggle through the objectivity of a "value-neutral" science, or through the mediation of "independent" intellectuals.

It is worth noting that Weber's position essentially expresses the essence of modernity, which is characterized, according to Heidegger, by the metaphysical opposition between the subject and the objectivism of science. "Never has the 'world' been so objectively experienced and represented as in the age of subjectivism." Late nineteenth-century "liberalism" is a further development and "degeneration" (*Abartung*) of this *libertas*, this "absolute self-rule of man" characteristic of "modernity."[129] The discourse of the *Weltanschauungen* is based upon the metaphysics of subjectivity, and precisely because of this, it produces its polar opposite, the *Wertfreiheit*, or, to use Heidegger's term, the *Standpunktsfreiheit*. The radical questioning of modernity demands drastic criticism of this discourse. In reality, "the point of view of the absence of a point of view" reduces philosophy to "so-called points of view, considered something conclusive." That is, it ends up reducing philosophy to a *Weltanschauung*. When instead, the

> characteristic of a concrete position [*Standortcharakter*]—this is clearly Mannheim's language,[130] which is similar to Weber's—an essential and uneliminable quality of every authentic philosphy, is not made harmless by the fact that it is carelessly negated and denied, but only in as much as it is deeply analyzed and understood, and redirected to its primal essence and its primal necessity. That is, its presumed dangerous nature is eliminated in as much as a new formulation and response are given to the essence of truth and to the essence of man's *Dasein*, thus training one to the most primal state of mind of the philosopher.[131]

Scientific truth, or objectivity, generally considered an overcoming or a transcendence of the many different *Weltanschauungen* and philosophical options, is instead itself an expression of the metaphysics of subjectivity and modernity. One must, once and for all, eliminate the modern and "Roman" conception of truth as *rectitudo* (calculative thought and organization of man's dominion over nature) in order to reconstruct the *aletheia* of Ancient Greece (truth as the unveiling of being).[132]

At this point Heidegger's criticism of the *Kriegsideologie* is evident. It is not enough to appeal to the *Gemeinschaft* in order to free oneself from the inheritance of modernity: "Emphasizing the community in opposition to the individual's own selfishness, is, metaphysically speaking, not the overcoming of subjectivism, but rather its fulfillment."[133] The elimination of subjectivism and individualism, in this sense the return to the authentic "community," is even more problematic and complex, and entails even more drastic revisions than those that the spokesmen for the *Kriegsideologie* furnished. The influence of the *Kriegsideologie* continues to be felt, though reshaped and transformed and, in a certain sense, even radicalized. One must not lose sight of two comparisons that were made beginning with the First World War: that is, the comparison between Germany and Greece on the one hand; and the comparison between Germany's Western enemies (to include America) and the Latin and Roman world, on the other (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 3). To Heidegger, the Roman world represents the profound crisis of the West, and is, in the final analysis, the starting point of the decline of modernity. The only hope or possibility is constituted by a Germany that is able to successfully incorporate the example of Greek antiquity. Germany must not stop halfway, and must not think twice about rejecting the manifold forms of modernity, including the "liberal" philosophy of world visions. And yet, many ideologists of the *Kriegsideologie* regard this "liberal" philosophy as the ideal theoretical platform to express Germany's essence and mission.

## 8. *Sein und Zeit* and the *Kriegsideologie*

Recently, Jürgen Habermas formulated a thesis according to which, "beginning in 1929, there is [in Heidegger] a *transformation of theory into ideology*. From that moment on, some neoconservative elements of a confused diagnosis of the age penetrate the heart of philosophy itself."

The year 1929 is, incidentally, the year of the "worldwide economic crisis."[134] This sort of interpretation, which allows Habermas to place *Sein und Zeit* in the category of pure "theory," is not very persuasive. To start with, there is the risk of economic reductionism when an excessively close relationship is established between the economic crisis and the move to neoconservative or reactionary positions. In support of his thesis, Habermas cites a passage we are already familiar with, taken from Heidegger's 1929–30 lecture, which violently criticizes the philistine ideal of a life of comfort sheltered from danger. But it is Heidegger himself who refers back to the *Kriegsideologie* when he complains that such ideals continue to linger despite the lessons of "an event of such proportion as a world war."[135] Heidegger's later lectures also accuse the period of being incurably deaf to the "terrible cry of world war" despite the fact that it has revealed the "death of the moral God," the Christian God, to whom both enemies appealed.[136] But Christianity's death also announces the death of its surrogates: democracy,[137] "pacifism," socialism, and "universal happiness," or "happiness for the greatest number."[138] All of these ideals are inspired by the ambition of eliminating danger, risk, and uncertainty; they are all characterized by the myth of "security" and a philistine vision of the world. The Christian sects, busy dispensing the "security of salvation" (*Heilsicherheit*),[139] are another integral part of the world of security which was revealed to be frivolous and inconsistent by the First World War. Once again there is a link to the *Kriegsideologie*; it would be very hard indeed to believe that this ideology did not influence Heidegger until 1929!

On the other hand, Habermas himself hints at the "peculiar connotations" of categories such as *Schicksal* and *Geschick* in *Sein und Zeit*.[140] In reality, we come across all of the key words in the *Kriegsideologie*: "community," "loyalty," "destiny." To emphasize common destiny, Heidegger, in *Sein und Zeit*, uses the term *Geschick* to refer to "predetermined individual destinies."[141] In this light, one recognizes the pathos of "loyalty to that which is to be repeated,"[142] loyalty that characterizes authentic existence (inauthentic existence, on the other hand, "looks for nothing but that which is modern").[143] His analysis of inauthentic existence ends up becoming a criticism of modernity, despite Heidegger's assurance in *Sein und Zeit* that he wants to avoid the "moralizing" attitude of the "philosophy of culture."[144]

As is the case with the *Kriegsideologie*, the theme of destiny immediately refers back to the theme of the community:

> But if fateful *Dasein*, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with Others, its historicizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as destiny [*Geschick*]. This is how we designate the historicizing of the community, of a people.

The *Gemeinschaft* to which he is referring is clearly in opposition to the *Gesellschaft*. "Destiny" (*Geschick*), in fact, "is not something that puts itself together out of individual fates any more than being-with-one-another can be conceived as the occurring together of several subjects."[145]

Certainly, the community theorized in *Sein und Zeit* wants nothing to do with the overwhelming standardization of individual uniqueness that is typical of the modern world. But this, too, is a classic theme of the *Kriegsideologie*: on the one hand it ascribes standardization, the leveling of socialism and the stratified-State to French and Western political tradition; on the other hand, the *Kriegsideologie* has the ambition of creating the authentic *Gemeinschaft* by respecting and valuing the individual in his uniqueness.[146] This is what Marianne Weber means when she says, as noted earlier, that the "personal rises to the overpersonal." And Spengler speaks of Prussian socialism as the synthesis of "*personal independence and overpersonal community* (*Gemeinschaft*)."[147] War and the camaraderie of the front seem to provide the solution to the problem of creating an organic community by starting from that which is most irreducibly individual, that is, death and courage in the face of death. In *Sein und Zeit* we read: "Only by authentically Being-their-Selves in resoluteness can people authentically be with one another—not by ambiguous and jealous stipulations and talkative fraterniziing in the 'they' and in what 'they' want to undertake."[148] On the other hand, we know that "*The 'they' does not permit us the courage for anxiety in the face of death.*"[149] Being able to look death in the face is the prerequisite for the creation of existence, of individuality in its *Eigentlichkeit*; and precisely for this reason, it is also the prerequisite for the creation of "authentic being with one another," of *eigentliches Miteinander*.

At this point, a comparison to Heidegger's 1934–35 lecture is appropriate. "It is precisely the death that each individual must die for himself, that death that individualizes him to the extreme, which, together with sacrifice, creates an environment ripe for camaraderie within the community."[150] "If we don't force into our *Dasein* some of the powers which, like death, are characteristic of free sacrifice, and which are able to unconditionally unite and individualize [*binden und vereinzeln*], that is, able to grab the individual from the roots of

*Dasein* . . . , then no 'camaraderie' is born. At the most, we attain a modified form of society [*Gesellschaft*]" that is the mere result of "establishing reciprocal relationships" under the banner of superficiality.[151] Knowing how to confront death may create an authentic community to the extent that it is a necessary ingredient for authentic individuality. But this theme, present throughout *Sein und Zeit*, insists on the fact that "anxiety individualizes" (*vereinzelt*) and thus "holds the possibility of a privileged opening up." "Individualized" existence, far from reducing itself to an "isolated" (*isoliert*) presence, is able to realize itself as an authentic "being in the world"[152] and so within a determined historicity and community. Authentic existence, which results from the anticipation of death, is a presupposition of *eigentliches Miteinander*. Or, "only through communication and struggle does the force of common destiny break free."[153]

One might say that, in the course of time, the "public sphere" (*Öffentlichkeit*) of "*das Man*"[154*] ends up becoming that (*Gesellschaft*) which, beginning with the *Kriegsideologie*, had become the favorite target of large sectors of German culture. As we know, the "*Man*" of 1927, two years later becomes the "mediocre and philistine man"[155] who is eventually denounced, under Nietzsche's influence, as the "last man." We have to ask ourselves if Nietzsche isn't perhaps one of the sources for the pages in *Sein und Zeit* dedicated to "*das Man*." These are the words used to denounce the last man in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*:

> One still loves one's neighbor, and rubs against him, for one needs warmth. . . . One still works, for work is a form of entertainment. But one is careful lest the entertainment be too harrowing. . . . One is clever and knows everything that has ever happened: so there is no end of derision. One still quarrels, but one is soon reconciled—else it might spoil the digestion. One has one's little pleasure for the day and one's little pleasure for the night: but one has a regard for health.[166]

Following Nietzsche's example, criticism of "*das Man*" increasingly becomes criticism of modernity, of the "mediocre and philistine *modern* man" (1929–30),[157] "*today's* man" (1936–38),[158] the "modern man" (1941).[159]

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*Heidegger's use of the impersonal "*Man*" is usually translated from German into English as "they," while the standard English editions of Nietzsche have translated "*Man*" as "one." To avoid confusion, when necessary the German has been used. Otherwise, we have remained faithful to the accepted translations.—Trans.

Therefore, it doesn't make any sense to speak of the "neoconservative" ideological change of 1929, especially since Habermas himself recognizes the profound political implications, "neoconservative" or reactionary, of the analysis of the inauthentic life of *das Man* in *Sein und Zeit*.[160] With regard to the "one," Heidegger observes in 1927, "The extent to which its dominion becomes compelling and explicit may change in the course of history."[161] So, one can well understand the hopes of the years following 1927. The *eigentliches Miteinander* in *Sein und Zeit* calls to mind the *unbedingtes Zueinandergehören* of Heidegger's 1934–35 lecture; *Geschick*, *common destiny* in *Sein und Zeit*, later becomes *deutsches Schicksal*, particularly during Heidegger's rectorial period; while the pathos of the *Gemeinschaft* remains identical. Camaraderie and the community presuppose—he states during his 1934–35 lecture—the "proximity of death" and anxiety, provided that the anxiety is not confused with the "vain quivering of a cowardice that has lost its head" (*hilfloses Beben einer kopflosen Feigheit*).[162] But *Sein und Zeit* also distinguishes between "cowardly fear" (*feige Furcht*) and the anxiety that is being-toward-death and which is only characteristic of a "resolute" *Dasein* that "knows no fear."[163] It should be added that during the course of the Second World War, Heidegger continues to give a militant, warlike interpretation of anxiety. This is not meant to be perceived as the "psychological state of those who are full of 'anxiety' or cowardice" (*Feigen*), those who are incapable of the "serene and courageous state of mind." To the contrary, "what would courage be if it did not find in the experience of essential anxiety its constant opposite?"[164] The lecture of 1934–35 asserts that "camaraderie derives from anxiety."[165]

We have to ask ourselves if this category of being-toward-death shouldn't be tied to the *meditatio mortis* that develops with the *Kriegsideologie*. In 1929—the effects of the First World War were still being felt—Marianne Weber tells of the impression that one of Heidegger's conferences (*Was ist Metaphysik?*) made on her: "His philosophy of death would surface by way of tranquil and penetrating explanations, rhetorically very well constructed. And his grave manner was very engaging."[166] While this may not be an expert's analysis, it does come from a person who lived through and effectively described the spiritual and emotional climate of the war years, which exalted the proximity of death as the moment when individual authenticity was retrieved from the banality of everyday life. The theme is also present, as we have seen, in the works of other authors such as Husserl and Scheler. In particular, we

have noted how Scheler emphasizes the "repression and concealment" of death under "the deceptive veil of a vital praxis that has become dull habit." What immediately comes to mind is the theme, continuously recurring in *Sein und Zeit*, of the concealment of death by the They and by everyday life. Everyday life, Heidegger emphasizes, at the most attributes to death "an *empirical* certainty, which is necessarily imperfect in comparison to supreme, apodictic certainty."[167] But Scheler had already written that the certainty of death, which is concealed by the banality of everyday life, and retrieved instead through war, goes well beyond the "experience of induction."[168]

Contrary to Habermas's theory about Heidegger's 1929 "ideological" and "neoconservative" change of direction, criticism of the philistine and banausic vision of existence which aims at banishing "danger" and "terror," can be traced back to his 1921–22 lecture. There is a short chapter dedicated, even in the title, to criticizing *Das "Leichte"*; that is, to criticizing "comfort" (*Bequemlichkeit*), "security" (*Sicherheit*), and *Sorglosigkeit* (*securitas*).[169] But "security," the antithesis of which is *Sorge* (concern or care), is one of the primary targets of the *Kriegsideologie*. In fact, *Sorge*, another fundamental category of *Sein und Zeit*, refers directly to the *Kriegsideologie*. For Spengler, too, to abandon oneself to "security" means to be *sorglos*, "carefree."[170] It is worth noting that, in *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, *Sorge* has a strong connotation given that it indicates a "primal notion," typical of the "Western soul," which involves protecting tradition, and the "will to future." And so it is the opposite of carpe diem, "carefree abandonment [*sorgloseste Hingegebenheit*] to the moment and its possibilities." Spengler underscores the relationship between historicity and concern, which he defines as "the primal notion of the future," a "historical notion" in opposition to the "apathetic, carefree adaptation to a becoming typical of a man who only sees himself as 'nature.' "[171] We must not make hasty connections between Heidegger and Spengler, or deny the profound differences between the two authors (for example, whereas in Spengler the contrast between concern and lack of concern recalls different cultures and *Weltanschauungen*, in Heidegger it recalls authentic existence or inauthentic existence). And yet, it is undeniable that there are ideas and formulations in Spengler's work that are reminiscent of Heidegger. As for Heidegger, it is possible to note a distinct continuity: In 1921–22 it is "life in its facticity" (*das faktische Leben*) that searches for "comfort" or for "lack of concern."[172] *Sein und Zeit* not only highlights the relation-

ship between concern, "decision," and being-toward-death, but it defines everyday life and the life of the "they" as a *besorgte Sorglosigkeit*, that is, as a carefree and crude bustling about.[173] Nineteen thirty-four to thirty-five: "Everyday life truly coincides with a lack of concern [*Sorglosigkeit*]."[174] One must not forget that in this lecture the theme of the "camaraderie of the soldiers at the front" recurs continuously. On the one hand, the lecture of 1921–22 asserts that the essence of *Sorglosigkeit* is the retreat from the "primal decision [*Urentscheidung*]."[175] On the other hand, *Beiträge zur Philosophie* defines *Sorge* as the "decision that anticipates [*vorgreifende Entschiedenheit*] the truth of being,"[176] that truth which alone can justify "sacrifice."[177] It is true that Heidegger emphasizes that concern has nothing to do with the "'power' of heroic philistines";[178] and it is likewise true that he declares that he does not want to create a "heroic philosophy."[179] But it is interesting that this last assertion is made within a text that is replete with the appeal to "sacrifice" in the name and defense of the "truth of being." The issue here is the foundation of the courage and camaraderie of the soldiers at the front. According to Heidegger, this foundation does not stem from "common enthusiasm," but rather from anxiety,[180] the anxiety—his text of 1943 clarifies—through which, in some way, the "being" and its reference to man emerge.[181]

It is in this sense that Heidegger exalts Schlageter, the hero characterized, as we know, not by the easy sentimental impulses typical of the emotions of the masses, but by the capacity to die in solitude.[182] *Dasein* chooses "its heroes," Heidegger notes in *Sein und Zeit*,[183] and Schlageter is later presented as an example of this.

## NOTES

1. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie* (Berlin-Heidelberg, 1948), p. 222.
2. Ibid., p. 413.
3. Ibid., p. 272.
4. Karl Jaspers, "Lebensbeschreibung" (it is an autobiographical sketch prepared in 1946 for the occupying military authorities), in K. Jaspers and K. H. Bauer, *Briefwechsel 1945–1968*, ed. Renato De Rosa (Berlin-Heidelberg–New York, 1983), p. 1.
5. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, p. 210.
6. Ibid., p. 482.
7. Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin, 1947), p. 22; Eng-

lish translation, *Man in the Modern Age*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1957), p. 25.

8. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, pp. 34ff.

9. Ibid., p. 73.

10. Ibid., pp. 81ff.; *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 101.

11. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 22.

12. Ibid., pp. 70ff.

13. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, p. 632.

14. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 71.

15. Ibid., p. 96.

16. Ibid., p. 96.

17. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, pp. 271–72.

18. Published in Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt–New York, 1988), p. 113.

19. Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* (München–Zürich, 1985), p. 257; *Philosophie*, p. 615.

20. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, p. 614.

21. Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, 4th ed. (Basel, 1944), pp. 257ff.

22. Cf. the article published by the Nazi brochure "Der Alemanne" on May 7, 1933, in order to celebrate the legalization of duels in Freiburg as "a great *historical event*," and to welcome the speech with which Heidegger, as the rector of the university, was said to have underlined the "moral values" of the institution of the duel: Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962), pp. 28ff.

23. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, p. 120.

24. Ibid., p. 414. To support his thesis, Jaspers even refers back to the chapter of the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* on the dialectics of master and servant (the master is the one who has succeeded in mastering the fear of death.) In reality, already in Hegel's time, teutonophile students had quoted this passage to justify and celebrate the duel; but this interpretation had already been vehemently rejected in the *Encyclopedia*, and anyway, not only Hegel but the entire Hegelian school were strongly committed against the plague of duels and the ideology that accompanied it. Cf. Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel und das deutsche Erbe: Philosophie und nationale Frage zwischen Revolution und Reaktion* (Köln: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989), chap. 7, § 2.

25. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, p. xii.

26. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, p. 491.

27. Karl Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph" (1932), *Aneignung und Polemik: Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. H. Saner (München, 1968), p. 478; one should keep in mind however, that the original title of the essay was different (cf. *infra* n. 34).

28. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, p. 229.

29. Jaspers, *Philosophie*, p. vi.

30. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, p. 322.

31. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 68.

32. Ibid., pp. 100, 88.

33. Cf. Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945: Nationalsozialismus uns Bolschewismus* (Frankfurt, 1987), p. 416.

34. Karl Jaspers, *Max Weber: Deutsches Wesen im politischen Denken, in Forschen und Philosophieren* (Oldenburg: Verlag Gerhard Stalling, 1932). As for Hannah Arendt's criticism, cf. a letter dated January 1, 1933, in Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1926–1969* (München-Zürich, 1985), p. 52. It is true that Jaspers declares that the subtitle was a "compromise" with the publisher, but only in the sense that he would have preferred not to have had it at all, not in the sense that he questioned its meaning (cf. a letter dated January 3, 1933, ibid., pp. 53ff.) After all, the pathos of "German essence" explicitly permeates the whole text: cf. Jaspers, "Max Weber. Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph" (note the change that has by now modified the title), in particular p. 478.

35. Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," pp. 437ff.

36. Ibid., pp. 435, 444; as for Weber's statements about the *November-revolution* and Gdansk, cf. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, 1926), pp. 645, 643.

37. Cf. a letter dated December 8, 1932, in Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963*, ed. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (Frankfurt, 1990), p. 148.

38. Arendt and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, 52–54. English translation, *Correspondence*, trans. Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992), p. 17. On Weber's wish that Germany will return to her "ancient glory," cf. Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 685.

39. Jaspers, "Lebensbeschreibung," p. 4.

40. Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," p. 475.

41. Jaspers, "Lebensbeschreibung," p. 5, and *Philosophische Autobiographie* (München-Zürich, 1984), p. 76.

42. Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," p. 479.

43. Arendt and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 52, 54.

44. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 192.

45. Herbert Marcuse, "Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitären Staatsauffassung," in *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1934), 188n. 3, 191n. 4. As for the passage from the rectorial speech cited by Marcuse, cf. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt a.M., 1983), p. 14.

46. Cf. the correspondence published in Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 110–12.

47. Cf. a letter written by Jaspers on August 23, 1933, in Heidegger and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 155–57.

48. Cf. a letter dated April 3, 1933, in Heidegger and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 151ff. (At this point, although disagreeing with Krieck's agenda of cultural policy, Heidegger acknowledges in him "some authentic impulses," at least with regards to his intentions and state of mind: cf. a letter dated March 30, 1933, to Elisabeth Blochmann, in Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Storck [Marbach, 1990], pp. 60ff.) As for Schadenwaldt's relation to the Nazi regime, cf. Luciano Canfora, *Ideologie del classicismo* (Torino, 1980), pp. 135ff.

49. Karl Jaspers, "Thesen zur Frage der Hochschulerneuerung," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Karl-Jaspers Gesellschaft* 2 (1989): 5–27.

50. Ibid., p. 22.

51. Cf. n. 4 to the above-mentioned letter by Jaspers, in Heidegger and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, pp. 259ff.

52. Cf. a letter dated March 30, 1933, in Heidegger and Blochman, *Briefwechsel*, p. 176.

53. His father is said to have exclaimed: "Son, we have lost our motherland": cf. a letter to Heidegger dated July 10, 1949, in Heidegger and Jaspers, *Briefwechsel*, p. 176.

54. Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz* (Bremen, 1947), p. 79.

55. Ibid., p. 44.

56. Ibid., p. 70.

57. Ibid., pp. 56, 45.

58. Ibid., pp. 66ff.

59. Ibid., p. 67; italics are Jaspers's.

60. Max Weber, "Politik als Beruf" (1919), in *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1971), pp. 550ff.

61. Cf. a letter dated November 13, 1918 in Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 615.

62. Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz*, pp. 67ff.

63. With regard to the condemnation of fascism, cf. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, pp. 79, 94; for the note, cf. ibid., p. 242.

64. In Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 218.

65. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 15.

66. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, p. 149.

67. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 245.

68. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein' " (1934–35), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 39 (Frankfurt a.M., 1980), pp. 72ff.

69. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, pp. 151ff.

70. Cf. Jaspers's testimony, *Philosophische Autobiographie*, p. 101.

71. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 151.

72. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 14.

73. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 229.

74. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 15.

75. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " pp. 173–74, 245.

76. Ibid., pp. 283ff.

77. Ibid., pp. 174ff.

78. Ibid., p. 143.

79. Ibid., pp. 185ff.

80. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, p. 149.

81. Martin Heidegger, "Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik" (1929–30), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vols. 29–30, pp. 245, 247, 255.

82. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, (München, 1933), p. 10.

83. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung im abendländischen Denken" (1937), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 44, pp. 33ff., and "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst" (1936–37), in ibid., vol. 43, p. 259. As for Nietzsche, cf. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 5.

84. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus" (1940), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 48, pp. 13, 15.

85. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, ed. Hanno Helbling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 181.

86. Werner Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 76ff., 83.

87. Franz Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* (Leipzig, 1939), p. 108.

88. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 14.

89. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, p. 181.

90. Ibid., p. 150.

91. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 13.

92. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 149ff.

93. Ibid.

94. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 16.

95. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, p. 48.

96. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 221.

97. Martin Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)" (1936–38), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65, p. 54.

98. Martin Heidegger, "Parmenides" (1942–43), in ibid., vol. 54, pp. 76ff.

99. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 149ff.

100. Ibid., p. 181.

101. Heidegger, "Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik," pp. 258, 261.

102. The category of "*socially independent intelligentsia*" (*sozialfreischwebende Intelligenz*) owes its celebrity above all to Mannheim, despite the fact that Mannheim declares that he deduced it from Alfred Weber: cf. Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt, 1952), p. 135. (It is taken from the

1937 expanded English edition. The one considered here, instead, is the original text of 1929.) The relationship between Heidegger and Mannheim does not seem to have been given much attention yet. And still, the sociologist Mannheim often refers to Heidegger's work, highlighting its importance (together with Scheler's, as an example of the "Phenomenological current" in "opposition to the modern intellectualism," which is the sociology of knowledge: cf. ibid., p. 155n.). Mannheim even makes reference to Heidegger's lectures (cf. Karl Mannheim, *Wissenssoziologie: Auswahl aus dem Werk*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff [Berlin, 1964], pp. 623, 388n. and *passim*). Heidegger's influence on Mannheim's most important work can also be inferred by certain terms used, such as the adjective "ontic" (*ontisch*) (cf. *Ideologie und Utopie*, p. 80) which is then abandoned, at least in the 1953 English edition. Even more interesting is that in the ensuing debate over the sociology of knowledge, Heidegger's vision of man as Being-in-the-World is often cited as evidence of the inevitable ontological conditioning of knowledge, and so close to the central theme of *Ideologie und Utopie* (cf. Karl Mannheim, *Der Streit um die Wissenssoziologie*, ed. Volker Meja and Nico Stehr [Frankfurt, 1982], *passim*). But in reality, as will be made evident in the next paragraph, Heidegger and Mannheim are very far apart, not only with regard to the role of intellectuals, but even with regard to the relationship between science and world vision.

103. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 87.

104. Wilhelm Stapel, printed in Léon Poliakov and Joseph Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker* (München, 1978), p. 66. His Hitlerism notwithstanding, Stapel is not considered by Rosenberg to be Orthodox enough: cf. ibid., p. 64.

105. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 15.

106. Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 180ff.

107. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 15ff.

108. Alessandro Dal Lago ("La politica del filosofo: Heidegger e noi," in Alessandro Dal Lago and Pier Aldo Rovatti, *Elogio del pudore: Per un pensiero debole* [Milano, 1989], pp. 62–103; cf. in particular pp. 84, 99) who, with regard to the discourse on *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*, repeatedly asserts that Plato was a "philosophical shadow throughout Heidegger's text," probably "the author that Heidegger had in front of him when writing the book."

109. Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933–34: Tatsachen und Gedanken" (1945), published as an appendix to *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 27.

110. The author of the review is Hugo Marx (Zürich): cf. *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 3 (1934): 137–42. Ernst Krieck's text is entitled *Die Erneuerung der deutschen Universität*.

111. Martin Heidegger, "Zur Bestimmung der Philosophie" (1919), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vols. 56–57, p. 7.

112. Max Weber, "Die Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, 6th ed., ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1985), p. 604.

113. Martin Heidegger, "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers 'Psychologie der Weltanschauungen' " (1919–21), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, pp. 41ff.

114. In addition to his review of Jaspers, Weber is cited in Martin Heidegger, "Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik" (1928), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 26, p. 64, and in "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 18. Together with the theory of value-neutrality, Heidegger rejects Weber's theory that *Entzauberung* is a necessary condition for the technological and industrial development of the West (cf. above, chap. 5, § 3).

115. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," p. 127.

116. Ibid., p. 113.

117. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 195.

118. Victor Farias, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1989), p. 283.

119. Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit: Einleitung in die Philosophie" (1930), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 31, p. 273. Cf. also "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 53.

120. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " pp. 26–28.

121. Ibid., p. 28.

122. Martin Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik" (1935), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 40, p. 208.

123. For example, Hermann Glockner and Karl Larenz who, immediately after the *Machtergreifung*, decide to retitle their magazine *Logos* as *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturphilosophie*, in order to underscore the tie to the "German vision of the world." Cf. the introduction of the two directors and the article, "Deutsche Philosophie," by H. Glockner, in the *Logos* 1 (1935): 2, 4.

124. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," pp. 40ff. America is made analogous to the USSR which, from a "metaphysical" point of view, is nothing different (ibid.). In fact, "Bolshevism is merely a different version of that which is American": "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister' " (1942), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 53, p. 86. These are cultural and political stereotypes that are prevalent in fascist Italy as well: cf. Michela Nacci, *L'antiamericanismo in Italia negli anni trenta* (Torino, 1989).

125. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " p. 86.

126. Martin Heidegger, "Grundbegriffe" (1941), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 51, pp. 14, 84.

127. Ibid., p. 14.

128. Ibid., pp. 84, 92.

129. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 212ff.

130. Cf. Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, p. 71.

131. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," p. 212.

132. In particular Heidegger, "Parmenides," pp. 72ff.

133. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 212.

134. Jürgen Habermas, "Heidegger: Werk und Weltanschauung, Vorwort," in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Victor Farias (Frankfurt, 1989), pp. 17ff.

135. Heidegger, "Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik," pp. 255ff.

136. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," pp. 188ff. Cf. "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," p. 191.

137. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," p. 200.

138. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 56, 168, 13, 15.

139. Martin Heidegger, "Heraklit" (1943, 1944), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 55, p. 209. Cf. "Parmenides," pp. 76ff.

140. Habermas, "Heidegger," p.17.

141. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 74, in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 2, p. 508.

142. Ibid., § 74, p. 509.

143. Ibid., § 75, p. 517.

144. Ibid., § 34, p. 222.

145. Ibid., § 74, p. 508; English translation, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 436. With regard to this theme cf. also D. Thomä, *Die Zeit des Selbst und die Zeit danach. Zur Kritik der Textgeschichte Martin Heideggers 1910–1976* (Frankfurt a.M., 1990), pp. 542–54.

146. Cf. Domenico Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel* (Milano: Guerini e associati, 1987), pp. 65–82.

147. Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (München, 1921), p. 31. Even a Nazi party leader, Robert Ley, tells us that "National Socialism can take credit for having developed individuality to its furthest extent, but *in favor of the community, not in opposition to the community.*" Citing this, favorably, is Sombart, who notes that the position taken by the Third Reich is anything but isolated. Cf. Sombart, *Deutscher Sozialismus*, pp. 49ff.

148. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 60, p. 395; *Being and Time*, pp. 344–45.

149. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 51, p. 338; *Being and Time*, p. 298.

150. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 73.

151. Ibid., pp. 72ff.

152. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 40, pp. 250, 253.

153. Ibid., § 74, p. 508.

154. Ibid., § 27, p. 170.

155. Along this line see Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, eds. Annemarie Gehtmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 42.

156. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, p. 5.

157. Heidegger, "Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik," p. 255 (my italics).

158. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 12 (my italics).

159. Heidegger, "Grundbegriffe," p. 14.

160. Habermas, "Heidegger," p. 16.

161. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 27, p. 172; *Being and Time*, p. 167.

162. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 73.

163. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §§ 53, 68, pp. 353, 456.

164. Martin Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?'" (1943), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, pp. 305, 307.

165. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 73.

166. Marianne Weber, letter from December 21, 1929, in *Wege einer Freundschaft. Briefwechsel Peter Wust-Marianne Weber*, ed. W. T. Cleve (Heidelberg, 1951), p. 199.

167. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 52, p. 342.

168. Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg," p. 83. It is interesting to note that, outside of Germany, the theme of death, which "fulfills our life," is present in the "philosophy of war" so dear to Gentile and in the exaltation of war as the "absolute act": cf. Giovanni Gentile, "La filosofia della guerra," in *Opere*, ed. Hervé A. Cavallera (Firenze, 1989), p. 14.

169. Martin Heidegger, "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung" (1921–22), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 61, pp. 108ff. In this lecture, W. Franzen has already drawn attention to the theme examined in "Die Sehnsucht nach Härte und Schwere," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, eds. Gethmann-Siefert and Pöggeler, p. 91n. 15.

170. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 10.

171. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (München, 1980), pp. 177–79, 341.

172. Heidegger, "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles," pp. 108ff.

173. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, §§ 51, 60, 50, pp. 337, 398, 335.

174. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 281.

175. Heidegger, "Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles," p. 109.

176. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie, p. 35.

177. Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' " p. 308.

178. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 281.

179. Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' " p. 308.

180. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymnen 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " p. 73.

181 Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' " p. 308.

182. Schneeberger, "Nachlese zu Heidegger," pp. 47–49.

183. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 74, p. 509.

*THREE*

# GERMANS, EUROPEANS, GYPSIES, AND PAPUANS

## 1. "HISTORICITY" AND THE NEGATION OF THE UNIVERSAL CONCEPT OF MAN

One might say that with the war, a sort of anthropological nominalism, which aims at refuting the universal concept of man, begins to circulate in Germany. Not by chance, an author who becomes very popular in this period is Edmund Burke: In the past, he had criticized the French Revolution, juxtaposing typically English rights, which were handed down as heritage, to the rights of the universal man. These rights referred to a historically and concretely determined community rather than to humanity. World War I is raging, but Sombart does not feel uneasy about referring to Burke; and since Burke, as a British man, belonged to a people of "merchants," the German nationalist Sombart bestows upon him a sort of honorary citizenship, declaring that, in reality, he is "anti-British."[1] During and after the war, both Ernst Troeltsch[2] and Schmitt,[3] two representatives of the "conservative revolution," like Arthur Moeller van der Bruck and Georg Quabbe,[4] speak of Burke with respect and admiration. Even rigorous historiographical texts reveal how enthusiastically Burke was regarded, on the political level as well as others. According to Friedrich Meinecke, Burke is credited not only with drawing attention to man's historical and communal links as they oppose the "doctrine of natural law," but also of highlighting some important values which are the basis of "Western States." Not by chance, this author has a "profound influence on romantic Ger-

many.[5] In 1927, Mannheim, also inspired by the present situation and by the proliferation of conservative and antirevolutionary currents in the Weimar Republic, publishes an essay on conservative philosophy. In it, he indicates how Burke's strong impact "has influenced to a certain extent all antirevolutionary positions." As a consequence of this, "every modern conservatism" somehow follows Burke's famous condemnation of revolutionary thought.[6]

More than any other, it is Spengler who explains the political reasons for Burke's popularity in Germany at that time. He himself exalts Burke for having deconstructed the image of man,[7] an image that appears to Spengler, an influential representative of the *Kriegsideologie* and of the "conservative revolution," as empty and even somewhat revolting. " 'Humanity' is either a zoological concept or an empty term."[8] For the "abstract" concept of man we must substitute "the material man . . . grouped together as a people [*völkerhaft gruppiert*]," and therefore not "*without history*" (*geschichtslos*) or indifferent to the "destiny of his people."[9] This is also Sombart's opinion: "We must erase from our souls even the last remnants of the old ideal of 'humanity's' progressive evolution."[10] In reality, the so-called universal love of humanity serves only to "lower the value of smaller communities such as the family, the people, and the motherland."[11] In turn, Jünger considers "man's universal rights" as fundamentally unrelated to the German spirit, and ironically comments on the world of the "bourgeois" (*Bürger*), which clings to the idea of a "universally binding morality." The man of the bourgeoisie believes that the dream of a "humanity . . . divided into States, nations or races is a conceptual error," and that this error can be corrected and overcome "through contracts, enlightment, good manners, or simply through the modernization of transportation."[12]

With reference to these refutations of the universal concept of man, not only Burke comes to mind, but also Joseph de Maistre, who will later be exalted by Schmitt as "a great and courageous thinker" (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 7). Maistre had summed up his criticism of the constitutions that had emerged from the French Revolution, all of which were based upon the universal concept of man, as such: "*Man* no longer exists in the world. I have seen French people, Italians, Russians, etc., and thanks to Montesquieu I know *that there are Persians*. But as for *man*, I declare that I have never met him in my life; if he exists, I am not aware of it."[13] Some significant events contribute to Germany's rejection of universalistic ideas: first, there is the world war, which is conducted by the

Entente powers on the basis of an ideology, mostly typical of France and England, that presents the conflict as a sort of crusade. The goal of this crusade is to spread democracy around the world, in opposition to the authoritarian, militaristic attitude represented by the central empires. Second, there is the Bolshevik Revolution, which aims at unifying the world on the basis of communism and on the collectivization of the means of production. Third, there is the collapse of the Hohenzollern and Hapsburg dynasties that comes about when the Social Democratic Parties rise to power. And finally, there is the creation, in the West, of the League of Nations, which has a universalistic foundation, but an explicitly and objectively anti-German function. As already stated above, in Germany all of these events lead to the rejection of universalistic ideas. They are denounced by a large number of people as a threat to the establishment and to social relationships, as well as to historical tradition, cultural uniqueness, and even to the autonomous existence of the country. Political conservatism and *Kulturkritik*, long denouncing the standardization, leveling, and easy ratification of the modern world, are strictly linked to legitimate preoccupations regarding the nation, and to nationalistic, revanchistic agitation.

This is the starting point to any understanding of the pathos of historicity that characterizes the work of both Heidegger and Jaspers. According to Mannheim, the main category handed down by Burke to the conservative and antirevolutionary tradition is that of "history."[14] Since the end of the eighteenth century, of course, colossal changes and transformations have occurred. In the presence of a world that seems to be collapsing, what emerges is the overwhelming feeling that the West and civilization itself are declining; it is no longer possible to link the category of history to that of continuity and gradual development. In a situation in which every historical tradition seems to dissolve, swept away by the insurrection of uprooted and fanaticized masses, the reclaiming of history or of historicity can no longer be carried out by a conservatism that is synonomous with a collective consciousness and a serene attachment to existing things. Historicity must now be reconquered, and this can only be accomplished by individuals who manage to avoid standardization and rampant conformism, and who, despite being unconventional and therefore isolated, are determined to recuperate the authentic dimension of existence. Already in Burke, the juxtaposition of history and concrete national tradition to the universalism of the rights of man as proclaimed by the French Revolution, entails the exaltation of unique-

ness. This exaltation becomes even more radical when the reclaiming of historicity demands the ability to oppose not only a threatening international lineup, but also, and within Germany, a prevailing public opinion that stems from the ruinous uprooting that occurred in the past, and that therefore bears the mark of inauthenticity.

Although Jaspers's position in the period between the two wars is less radical than Heidegger's, both share a hostility "*towards all universals* (like humanity, the International, and Catholicism)."[15] Heidegger speaks of a sort of anthropological nominalism, partly inherited by Nietzsche. Nietzsche explicitly refers to the nominalistic positions that emerged during the scholastic debate over universals in order to criticize "general concepts" as empty "abstractions." He then bitterly attacks the universal concept of man, which he analyzes and denounces throughout its historical development, particularly from Christianity through to socialism.[16]

Baeumler exalts Nietzsche as the "highest point of nominalism,"[17] and another ideologist of the regime, Heyse, makes reference to the medieval debate on universals: Heyse considers it the result of the colossal, catastrophic misunderstanding of Greek culture on the part of Christianity, which foolishly theorizes " 'humanity' in a 'general' and 'universal' sense." Thus, what causes the downfall of the West is considered the construction of the universal concept of man. This concept starts to take shape already in the late Roman era, but it is again questioned and even destroyed by Nazism. In place of " 'universal' and 'universally human' ideas and ideologies," Nazism chooses to make the "German man," "our own historical *Dasein*," and "German historical existence," the center of attention.[18]

It is necessary to keep in mind this historicocultural context in order to solve the apparent contradiction in Heidegger between individualism, which seems to characterize existential analytics, and the pathos of the authentic *Gemeinschaft*, which is already present in *Sein und Zeit*. In reality, "its starting point is never the common [*Gemeinsames*] unifying element," but always the irreducible uniqueness "of the individual, or even the nation." This leads from the "*Dasein*" of the individual to that of the German nation or community.[19] The category of the "*Dasein*," with that particle (*Da*) that emphasizes the here and now, aims at denying the category of mankind. If we regard the subject as *daseinmäßig*, that is, in accordance with the category of *Dasein*, we can never subsume it under the category of "character" (*Gattung*).[20] Even before *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger had observed that life is "always lived *hic et*

*nunc*" in a specific "historico-spiritual situation" (*geistesgeschichtliche Situation*). Therefore, the "actual experience of life . . . is not the universal of which the self would be the individual element, but rather it is an essentially 'historical' phenomenon."[21]

In the same way that Spengler declares that speaking of genre in reference to man really means using a "zoological concept," so, too, Heidegger affirms that this would involve the reduction of man to a mere material being, to a thing. It is an original thesis, since the only way out of this danger is in the negation of a category which is the only possible basis for affirming man's rights. All the more so since this thesis is explicitly inspired by Nietzsche, whose nominalistic position, however, clearly aimed at denying most people the title of "person," considering them instead mere "instruments of transmission," just like the slaves of ancient times. Baeumler, who exalts Nietzsche's "nominalism," passionately shares his sarcasm for the "imaginary dignity of man, and the generic concept [*Gattungsbegriff*] of man" as well.[22]

Certainly, with regard to Heidegger, Kierkegaard's influence must be kept in mind. Yet, this influence is always mediated by Nietzsche's presence and by his bitter stance against the universal concept of man, that antiuniversalistic and antidemocratic stance that Heidegger will dwell upon in later years, as we shall see (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 2). In any case, here we are referring to the Kierkegaard who strenuously fights against the typical "leveling" of "modern times." This leveling unleashes its terrible flattening and conforming power not only upon the political and social relationships within every specific state, but also upon international relationships: "Not even the individuality of nationalities manages to resist it, since the abstraction of the leveling process addresses a higher negativity, that of pure humanity."[23]

This last theme is also present in the *Kriegsideologie*, according to which Germany was forced to rush to arms in order to defend her "autonomous national culture" from the armed assault of "internationalistic democracy" and from the "rationalistic dissolution of national culture." This dissolution was carried out, perhaps peacefully, but nonetheless destructively, through the leveling of Western *Zivilisation*, which aimed at building the coveted "reconciled land of Esperanto" upon the ashes of different nationalities and national cultures.[24] This diatribe also reveals its presence behind the proud reclaiming of a unique "historicity" that characterizes German culture and philosophy, above all in the period between the two wars. Heidegger ascribes the irreducible unique-

ness of *Dasein* to both the individual and to a specific human community. The result, however, is the disappearance of any higher entity, overnational or "generic," that is, able to incorporate all people. Even though the individual's irreducible uniqueness is still exalted, the individual himself is swallowed up into the determined, nontranscendable historical community of which he is part ("destiny"). In other words, one could say that organicism, the pathos of the *Gemeinschaft*, is strictly connected to the emphasis of the *Jemeinigkeit*, that is, of unrepeatable uniqueness; organicism is, in the final analyis, the result of nominalism.

It is clear, then, how the category of historicity, in its various formulations and through manifold and complex mediations, has an important role, first in the *Kriegsideologie*, then in the "conservative revolution," and finally in Nazism and in its circles. In Schmitt as well, the pathos of the "historico-concrete"[25] community goes hand in hand with the negation of man's rights: "liberal individualism" is guilty of speaking of "man" and of "personality" in general, without taking into account concrete historicocultural, ethnic, or racial differences.[26] In reality, "there are as many types of fundamental rights [*Grundrechte*] as there are types of human communities."[27] Nazism and Fascism have therefore the merit of "substituting for the concept of 'man,' the concepts of 'citizen' and 'foreigner.' "[28] Already before the Nazi rise to power, Schmitt had written: "Every culture [*Kultur*] and every cultural epoch has its own concept of civilization. All the essential presuppositions of man's spiritual sphere are existential and not normative." The negation of universal laws is carried out, in this case, not by the reference to determined historicity, but by "concrete historical existence,"[29] and yet the political meaning and even the cultural sources seem to be the same.

The category of historicity emerges also in the works of the more or less official ideologists of the regime. They use it to criticize modern thought, accusing it of moving increasingly "away from historical life."[30] Also, *through* historicity they exalt "historical commitment" (*geschichtlicher Einsatz*), or—using a type of language once again reminiscent of Heidegger and Jaspers—the "commitment to existence" (*Einsatz der Existenz*), which is basically the commitment to a community well determined in its historical existence.[31] The theory of the "essence of historicity" is even used to dismiss the recently defeated Weimar Republic as the "time of historiographic knowledge" (*Zeit des historischen Wissens*), and to celebrate the new regime as the time of authentic "*historical consciousness.*"[32] Again, we are faced with the contrast between *Geschichte* and *His-*

*torie*, which is fundamental in *Sein und Zeit*, but which Böhm passes over in silence (the Third Reich's internal struggles have already begun).

Sometimes, the reference to Heidegger and Jaspers is explicit: Their lesson is considered precious and necessary, and it makes any further discourse on the intrinsic "historicity of our *Dasein*" superfluous. This new historical acquisition is used to highlight the unavoidable *völkisch* foundation of the authentic community. It invites people to fight "against the modern society of faithless world *Zivilisation* and lawless democracy," and it celebrates the new regime.[33]

## 2. "Historicity," "Difference," and "Struggle"

In 1938, Otto Friedrich Bollnow, in an essay clearly aligned with the positions of the regime (Bollnow repeatedly quotes several of its ideologists), makes reference to Heidegger and to his category of historicity in order to contrast the abstract "universal concept of man" with the "concrete totality" of a determined historical community:[34]

> Given the collapse of faith in reason as man's decisive essence, and given the rise of historical consciousness, it is no longer possible to consider humanity as a truly existing whole consisting of various peoples; rather, there are different peoples fighting against each other. The various peoples appear as the ultimate units, those who act and have an effect, whereas humanity is only a universal concept, not a real unit.[35]

To forget this means not only falling into a serious theoretical error, but above all to being guilty of "*treason against historical existence.*"[36]

From the category of historicity, the inevitable contrast between one people and another is inferred. Spengler had clearly underscored the fact that the universal concept of man is incompatible not only with the category of historicity, but also with that of "struggle":

> "Man as such," in the sense perceived by blabbering philosophers, does not exist. There exist only men of a determinate time, in a determined place, of a determined race, with personal characteristics; men who rise or fall in the struggle against a *given* world, while the whole universe around them remains still, in god-like indifference. This struggle is life and, in a Nietzschean sense, a struggle for the will to power, a cruel, inexorable, merciless struggle.[37]

In order to connect the category of "historicity" with that of "struggle," Bollnow refers not only to Schmitt, but to Jaspers, who includes "struggle" among "borderline situations."[38] In this context, Jünger is undoubtedly a significant figure: He exalts struggle as a primal, irradicable "vital form," indissolubly linked to the multiplicity and antagonism of different cultures and national values: "Humanity worships too many gods; in every god, truth manifests itself in a particular form." Nonetheless, a unification or a permanent reconciliation are impossible; this would only serve to debase the idea, which would be deprived of its seriousness, of its inner tension and polemical drive. This is why "struggle is still something sacred, God's judgment on two ideas."[39] In this sense, war, or *polemos*, is "the father of all things"; it "has educated us to the struggle, and we will struggle as long as we live."[40]

Heidegger, too, whom Bollnow seems to refer to as his teacher,[41] and who had already been faced with the term "struggle" as a "borderline situation" in his review of Jaspers,[42] exalts the importance of this category with incredible energy: "All the faculties of the will and of thought, all the powers of the heart, all the potentialities of the body must be developed through *struggle*, strengthened *in the* struggle, and protected *as* struggle." Heidegger's rectorial speech makes reference to Carl von Clausewitz, the most important theoretician and one of the central figures of Prussia's insurrection against Napoleon's humiliating occupation. Germany's humiliation, too, is going to end soon, and the "military service" introduced in the universities, which requires all students to share a "commitment till the end" (*Einsatz bis ins Letzte*) and to partake in the "nation's common destiny," aims at defending or recovering German "honor" in the community of the people.[43] According to Weber, that "honor" had been the real issue at stake in the war, a war which Germany had been forced into by "destiny" (cf. *supra*, chap. 1, § 1). A few months later, in a letter to Carl Schmitt, Heidegger links the theme of *polemos* as the father of all things, a theme that goes back to Heraclitus and of which Heidegger is very fond, to the conceptual pair friend/enemy, so dear to Schmitt and considered by Heidegger, too, to be an acquisition "of great importance."[44]

In all of these authors, the category of historicity is strictly connected to the category of struggle, to the affirmation of an agonistic conception of life, and to the rejection of the hideous bourgeois security that manifests itself in the ideal of a unified and reconciled world. One can therefore clearly understand the contemptuous meaning of certain expres-

sions used by Heidegger, such as "uncommitted, insubstantial universal brotherhood," or "meditation on an all-encompassing humanity itself" (*Denken einer Allerweltmenschheit an sich*) (cf. *infra*, chap. 3, § 10), or of "philosophy for the whole world" (*Allerweltsphilosophie*), an expression used by Böhm.[45] Historicity, the uncanny, and difference are absolutely insurmountable, but it is equally impossible to have irreducibly different cultures coexist and peacefully ignore one another. This would presuppose the presence of a higher entity, political or moral, which would be able to settle any conflict and to which one could appeal in order to obtain, or just to claim, the respect of one's identity and uniqueness. But to hypothesize a universal entity able to transcend the different historicities would mean to deny the historicities themselves, and to conduct an intolerable leveling and standardization of the world. There is no point in appealing to a superior justice that can be perceived only in the Nietzschean sense as the acknowledgment of the struggle of difference and dissimilarity. "This justice—Baeumler observes—does not rule *over* the world, *over* the opponents' fray. It does not know guilt or responsibility; it does not know judiciary proceedings or sentences; it is inherent in struggle. Therefore, peace in the world is not possible." Heraclitus was correct when he saw in war, in struggle, in *polemos*, the "father of all things." In this way, the great Greek philosopher expressed that which is also the "vision of primal Germanicity."[46]

If one can speak of difference and uniqueness, this can only happen within the struggle, in the war chivalrously conducted among the Western countries and peoples. Warriors are privileged because they can recognize one another on the common ground of "male courage"; for this reason—Jünger observes—we have shaken "the hand of those who had just thrown a grenade at us" and put crosses "even on the enemies' tombs."[47]

Nazism inherits the categories of historicity and struggle, exasperating them and applying them to a social Darwinism immune to any norm. As Germany's situation in the war is getting worse, Hitler, too, feels the need to make reference to the "serious and profound thesis of a great military philosopher, according to whom *struggle*, and therefore conflict [*der Krieg*], is *the father of all things.*"[48] Even though hardly recognizable under the military uniform that, in this atmosphere of total mobilization, has been put on him, this is Heraclitus. Now he has been made a prophet of a ruthless struggle, in which the only "world order" is that might makes right, a law imposed by nature.[49] Therefore, there is

no point in speaking of "humanity, universal Church," etc., as these categories are, according to Rosenberg, an intolerable "violence against nature in the name of abstractions." One must, instead, reject once and for all "the dogma of a presumed 'general evolution of humanity' " and dismiss "all 'absolute' and 'universalistic' systems which, on the basis of a presumed humanity, once again demand the eternal unity of all souls."[50] "Humanity" is always "presumed" to be; it is only a *flatus vocis*, the unfortunate remnant of a theology that is thankfully declining. The destruction of the universal concept of man has thus reached its most extreme consequences.

## 3. "SPIRIT" AND SUBVERSIVE INTELLECTUALISM

Criticism of universal norms and values meshes with criticism of the intellectual figure. The intellectual seems to embody the arrogant presumption of an illusory universality with no dimension of historicity. Certainly, behind this diatribe there is a long tradition that is not worth reviewing. What is interesting here is the latest chapter of this history. This begins with the First World War and with the link that the *Kriegsideologie* establishes between two elements: on the one hand, the figure of the intellectual, and on the other, the society and culture, or the lack thereof, as is the case of Germany's enemies. To *Zivilisation* belongs not only the "merchant," whom Sombart attacks most violently of all, but also the "man of letters," the *Zivilisationsliterat*.[51] The expression is Thomas Mann's, who even considers it a "pleonasm," since the two terms are so indissolubly tied together. The "man of letters" he refers to is none other than a distant descendant of the *philosophes*, whose country of choice is France, and whose motto is basically that which emerged in, or was inspired by, the 1789 revolution: "humanity, freedom, and reason."[52] He is the "political intellectual," committed just like he was at the time of the Dreyfus affair.[53] He is anti-German, even when he is born and lives in Germany; he is therefore "antinational," and characterized by a "lack of roots and of essence."[54] In his struggle for universal democracy, this man of letters continually speaks of "spirit" (*Geist*), which he puts in contrast to "power" (*Macht*), or to the "saber."[55] It would be a mistake—observes Thomas Mann—to superficially reduce *Zivilisation* to the cult of "material" elements. On the contrary, not only does it have "some-

thing spiritual, but it is, rather, *spirit itself*—spirit in the sense of reason, good manners, doubt, enlightenment and *disintegration*."[56] In other words: " 'Spirit' is the spirit of time, of the new, of democracy,"[57] of the acritical exaltation of modernity and the philistine adjustment to it. Due to its corrupting effect, and as a cause and expression of the leveling and uprooting process, *Geist* eventually becomes synonymous with "revolution" as well. Not by chance, the Jacobins make reference to it while carrying out their fanatical bloodbath.[58]

These committed "men of letters" and intellectuals of democratic universalism, of *Zivilisation* and of subversion, love to denounce their adversaries as "traitors of the spirit."[59] In turn, they are accused by Ernst Jünger of "high treason of the spirit against life."[60] This denunciation is present, almost a *leitmotif*, throughout a famous book by Ludwig Klages,[61] as can be gathered from the title, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*. The great influence of this book is highlighted by Thomas Mann in 1930. As Germany moves headlong toward catastrophe, Mann, by now solidly settled on the ground of democracy, makes an "appeal to reason." In it, he invites his fellow citizens not to let themselves be seduced any further by the thesis that presumes to condemn the "spirit" (and the "intellectuals" who embody it) as a "criminal against life" (*lebensmörderisch*).[62] Klages is instead quoted approvingly by Rosenberg, whose only disagreement is that, in Klages's book, the condemnation of the "spirit" seems to include also "reason" and even "will." On the contrary, for Aryans and Germanophiles, both reason and will are untainted, not marred by an abstract, sterile, and corrupting intellectualism.[63] If Klages contrasts the "soul" (*Seel*) to the "spirit" (*Geist*), Rosenberg makes use of this exaltation of the "soul," even though he reinterprets it as "the race seen from within," and perceives the race as "the outward side of a soul."[64] He underscores the condemnation not only of the "spirit," but of a rootless, intrinsically subversive, intellectualism. This theme recurs also in the work of another ideologist of the regime, Heyse, who in turn juxtaposes the "historical community" to the "modern idea of spirit, which has separated itself from every existence."[65] With Hitler's rise to power, as his followers and admirers sometimes observe with satisfaction, the "spirit" becomes "anachronism."[66]

Certainly, the term *Geist* is not always used in a negative sense. After all, as Ernst Jünger states, to "high treason of the spirit against life" one can answer with "high treason of the spirit against the 'spirit.' "[67] One could, and should, oppose one culture to another: "Spiritual" weapons

should not remain the exclusive possession of the enemy. And yet, precisely because of its ambiguity, the term *Geist* remains suspicious. This is the key to understanding Heidegger's rectorial speech, which has been interpreted as an unconditional exaltation of the spirit; and this exaltation in turn has been used to explain, or to confirm, Heidegger's encounter with Nazism.[68] At least as far as his relationship with Nazism is concerned, we seem to have provided enough proof to the contrary. Similar conclusions are drawn when we reread his rectorial speech: It is imbued with hostility and suspicion regarding that "spirit" that had already been attacked by the *Kriegsideologie*. In 1918, Thomas Mann criticizes "men of letters" because they insist on contrasting "spirit" and "power," and he condemns the spirit's "lack of roots and essence." Heidegger, in turn, denounces the "idolatry of a rootless and powerless philosophy [*bodenlos und machtlos*]" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 6). As for Jünger, he condemns the "high treason of the spirit against life," but he regards the "spirit which has a relationship to history" in a positive way.[69] In his rectorial speech, Heidegger constantly speaks of a "world," or of a "historico-spiritual *Dasein*."[70] The spirit can have a positive value only if it is subordinated to historicity. And against any ambition for autonomy, Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes the "predominance of the constitutive powers of the human *Dasein*'s world," or of the "human-spiritual *Dasein*": "nature, history, language, people, customs, State," and so on, as well as the "forces of the earth and of the blood."[71] When, instead, the spirit presumes to rise to "universal reason," to enunciate "essentiality and values in themselves," and to carry out a corrupting process of "intellectualistic dismemberment," then it is harshly condemned, put in quotes, and sternly ordered to respect historicity and the "*Dasein* of the people and of the State."[72] In another speech delivered during his rectorial period, Heidegger triumphantly announces the end of those concepts of " 'spirit' and of 'spiritual work,' with which the 'intellectual' [*Gebildeter*] has lived thus far." He also proclaims the coming of something radically new, a "spirit"—this time without quotes—intimately connected to "German *Dasein*," and therefore characterized by "willingness to sacrifice," "resoluteness," and "decisive commitment."[73] Once again, what is condemned is the spirit as synonymous with uprooting, that spirit which, instead of being *bodenständig*, presumes to be *freischwebend*, and to freely hover in the void that results from the loss of historicity and of any ties to the soil.

Similar arguments may also be applied to Heidegger's *Einführung*

*in die Metaphysik*, which was written in 1935. Here, too, the "spirit" is guarded by historicity, and solidly inserted in a *Dasein* that allows little leeway for universalistic diversions. In this sense, Heidegger speaks again of "historico-spiritual *Dasein*,"[74] and exalts the spirit in polemical contrast to Marx and to historical materialism, the latter of which presumes[75] to reduce it to a "superstructure." And yet, Heidegger still regards with horror the *Geist* that manifests itself as "intelligence" (*Intelligenz*),[76] and that finds its expression in a class of uprooted, subversive intellectuals, "men of letters" suffering from "vanity," as Heidegger had defined them a few years earlier,[77] or the "rootless ones" (*Bodenlosen*), as he will define them during another lecture.[78]

If one keeps in mind these two different meanings and aspects of the term "spirit," the continuity in Heidegger's development appears evident. Already before *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger contrasts the concreteness of the "historico-spiritual situation" to every attempt at formulating a universal discourse on man (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 1). In 1929, he insists that roots must be given back to "*German* spiritual life" in order to protect it from the danger of "Judaization" (cf. *infra*, chap. 4, § 4): "Spirit" and "spiritual" have a positive meaning only inasmuch as they reveal a tie to the soil and to a people's unique historicity. In this case, the *Bodenständigkeit* must be defended from the corrosive action of uprooted intellectuals. In 1940, Heidegger condemns the "bourgeois 'spirituality' and culture" that snubs Nazi Germany's blazing victories by ascribing them solely to the technical efficiency of the Third Reich's war machine (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 2). The "spirit" that, appealing to universal values, presumes to oppose itself to "power," and even to lay down the law for it, is still satirized and condemned, as in the *Kriegsideologie*. Heidegger's rectorial speech fits perfectly within this framework. *Sein und Zeit* declares that it is preferable to avoid using the category of "spirit"; this is true for the categories of "subject," "soul," and even for "man." It is the well-known rejection of the universal concept of man that for Heidegger is none other than the "Christian definition . . . deprived of its theological character," "in modern times."[79] This is the formulation of a theme that will be developed and radicalized (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 2), following Nietzsche's example, during the years between the *Machtergreifung* and the first phase of the war which witnesses Germany's blazing victories; the years, that is, of Heidegger's strongest involvement with the Nazi party and regime.

## 4. DETRANSCENDENTALIZATION AND DEUNIVERSALIZATION OF THE SUBJECT

At this point, any attempt to keep *Sein und Zeit* safely within the realm of pure "theory," would be vain. Heidegger himself continues to refer back to it even after 1933 (or 1929, which is indicated by Habermas as the turning point). This happens, in particular, in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, written between 1936 and 1938: It makes constant reference to *Sein und Zeit*, and is characterized from beginning to end by a sorrowful denunciation of the "escape of the idols" from the modern world (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 3). This denunciation would be defined by Habermas as "a confused, neoconservative-like diagnosis of the epoch." Heidegger refers to *Sein und Zeit* throughout his harsh diatribe against the liberal ideal of value neutrality, or *Standpunktfreiheit* (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 7).[80] Furthermore, Karl Löwith makes an important contribution by highlighting the link established by Heidegger in 1936 between the category of "historicity,"[81] which has a central role in *Sein und Zeit*, and his own commitment to Nazism. Nazism itself, thanks to some of its ideologists, makes large and skillful use of the category of "historicity" (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 1).

The goal is not to reduce Heidegger's masterpiece to a mere ideology, but rather to grasp the winding, problematic character of the line between theory and ideology (cf. *infra*, chap. 7, § 7). What Habermas finds most intriguing is the "overcoming of the subject," or the "*detranscendentalization* of the world's constitutive 'I.' " In this "new beginning," "the most significant change of direction in German philosophy since Hegel"[82] is found. This is the main theoretical point that cannot be reduced to the next ideological discourse. And yet, just a quick look at the course of history may be enough to make such a distinction / juxtaposition problematic. Many Nazi writers and ideologists have often referred to the philosophical theme so dear to Habermas in order to denounce any neutral position or scientific objectivity as contradictory and unacceptable. This is the case, for example, with Christoph Steding who, with regards to this matter, refers to the analysis of man as "being-in-the-world"[83] which is formulated in *Sein und Zeit*. Steding, a fervent Nazi at this point, not only rejects the category of "value neutrality" and criticizes "*freischwebend* speculation," but tirelessly emphasizes the liberal implications of Weber's view, which he repeatedly contrasts to *Sein und Zeit*.[84]

The category of *being-in-the-world* is also referred to by a major ideologist of the Third Reich, Franz Böhm, despite the fact that he does not

mention Heidegger. Not by chance, Böhm denounces René Descartes as "worldless" (*weltlos*),[85] and adds that the separation of subject and object is alien to authentic German culture and philosophy.[86] Significantly enough, Böhm considers Descartes guilty of being not only "worldless," but also "community-less" (*gemeinschaftslos*). Besides, Descartes's philosophy aims at "destroying and disinheriting historicity [*Geschichtlichkeit*]."[87] Moreover, among the targets of this diatribe we find not only Descartes, but also Jean-Jacques Rousseau and all those intellectuals who are defined as both "wordless" and "uprooted."[88] Thus, we reach the conclusion that for Böhm the category of being-in-the-world is synonymous with "roots," and with inclusion in a determined "community" and "historicity." The influence of *Sein und Zeit* is evident in many of Böhm's arguments, and in his claim that human life is always unique, and "is there" (*da ist*) even before any concept or problem.[89] This claim is once again in opposition to the abstract subjectivity of Descartes.

It is within this same context that one must examine Carl Schmitt, a theoretician of the Third Reich. Schmitt attempts to demonstrate that the "ontological link" (*Seinsgebundenheit*), that is, the "situational link" (*Situationsgebundenheit*) of every knowledge makes the formulation of authentic general norms impossible. Equally impossible is abstraction from the "community" to which the individual "existentially" (*existentiell*) belongs. In this sense, the *Seinsgebundenheit* or *Situationsgebundenheit* inevitably entails a *Volksgebundenheit*, that is, a nontranscendable "link of people" or even races. Therefore, there is no room for "objectivity,"[90] or for *freischwebend* intellectuals. Aside from the coquettish use of some conceptual categories and linguistic expressions which he gathers from Mannheim, Schmitt, too, reaches conclusions very similar to those of Böhm and Steding. Schmitt, who is Steding's reviewer,[91] would thus seem to be familiar with Steding's use of *Sein und Zeit* (and of the category of being-in-the-world) as a criticism of any aspiration to universality, objectivity, and neutrality.

This, however, is also Heidegger's position. We already noted his reference to his own masterpiece in his criticism of *Standpunktfreiheit*, or value neutrality. We must now add that the refutation of this category becomes part of the genesis and composition of *Sein und Zeit*. If we examine Heidegger's notes for a lecture in the summer of 1923, we see that a paragraph is dedicated to criticizing the "prejudice of value neutrality" (*Standpunktfreiheit*). The latter is considered "fatal" because, in

the name of the "seemingly supreme idea of scientific nature and objectivity, it elevates a-criticism to a principle, and spreads a fundamental blindness." This prejudice is connected to that of the separation between subject and object, and all this makes the understanding of "life in its facticity [the *Dasein*] impossible."[92] These are clearly the themes of *Sein und Zeit*, which, from its very beginning, aims at refuting some fundamental philosophical propositions: among them, the separation between subject and object, and the consequent creation of an object which can be investigated in an objective and value-neutral way, transcending the ineradicable plurality of values. These philosophical propositions will later be denounced by Heidegger as typical of the modern world and loaded with unacceptable liberal implications (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 7). In light of these considerations, we can perhaps interpret the meaning of an enigmatic note included in the same course of lectures from the summer of 1923: "Position free from conditioning = corrupted subjectivity" (*Freiständiger Standpunkt = Subjektsein verdorben*).[93] In Heidegger's point of view, the Weberian man seems to personify the liberal, modern man in his uprooting.

In contrast to Steding, Böhm and Schmitt, the categories of being-in-the-world and of "historicity" stir Mannheim's interest and, above all, young Marcuse's approval.[94] Marcuse's enthusiasm seems to be directed to the debate between two opposed criticisms of the "abstract" subject: on the one hand, a current that follows Burke, and on the other, a current started by Marx (who is in turn influenced by Hegel). Marx's criticism presupposes the development of the universal concept of man and, far from wanting to negate it, aims at forming it in the concreteness of economic-social relationships as well.[95] Even later on, Marcuse does not seem to completely understand this debate. What is significant, however, is the fact that, in reacting to Heidegger's rectorial speech and to his increasing commitment to the Nazi regime, Marcuse feels the need to critically reexamine the category of historicity. Certainly, he does not retract the appreciation he had expressed earlier:

> The point of philosophical existentialism was to regain the full coalescence of the historical subject, against the abstract "logical" subject of rational idealism. Thus, it was to eliminate the dominion of the *ego cogito*, which had lasted, undisputed, up to Husserl. Heidegger's position up to *Sein und Zeit* represents the highest point reached by philosophy in this direction.

Mannheim gives this same credit to the "phenomenological school" (Scheler and Heidegger) for its "opposition to modern intellectualism." This recognition is expressed by Habermas, as well, though in more emphatic terms, and in reference, above all, to Heidegger. In 1934, however, Marcuse's argument goes well beyond this praise; immediately afterward, it highlights the basic limit of Heideggerian "historicity," which abstains from

> examining more closely the historical situation, in its material facticity, of the subject it addresses. Here concreteness stops, and the investigation limits itself to mere discourses on the unity of the people in their "destiny," the "heritage" that the individual must make his own, and on the community of "generations." The other dimensions of facticity, instead, are examined under the categories of the "they," of "idle talk," etc., and in this way are relegated to "inauthentic" existence.[96]

Thus, in 1934, Marcuse realizes how the political implications present in Heideggerian "historicity" could be potentially dangerous. Though only briefly, he hints at the disturbing corruption of this category, from *Sein und Zeit* through to the rectorial speech: "Existentialism, too, sees in the 'forces of the earth and of the blood' the true historical forces." Using this conclusion as a point of departure, Marcuse reveals the basic ambiguity and theoretical insufficiency of the category of historicity. He somehow perceives in *Sein und Zeit* the presence of two ideological elements that are reciprocally intertwined: the exaltation of the organic community and the antidemocratic implications of the category of the "they" and of "idle talk" (this last element will later be largely developed by Lukács).

By itself, the history of an author's or of a work's success does not solve the problem of its interpretation, and yet, in this specific case, it can be useful in order to avoid an overly schematic delimitation between theory and ideology. Habermas is intrigued by the detranscendalization of the subject which, however, is at the same time its de-universalization. If detranscendalization draws young Marcuse's attention, de-universalization, instead, explains Heidegger's encounter with Nazism, and it is precisely this aspect that motivates the break between Husserl and his disciple.

## 5. THE CRITICISM AND REINTERPRETATION OF HISTORICITY: HUSSERL

As early as 1923, Heidegger criticizes phenomenology for its lack of historicity (*Geschichtslosigkeit*) and for its tendency to disregard the dimension of "being rooted in the soil" (*Bodenständigkeit*).[97] Considering, among other things, the important political implications it involves, this seems to be the central point of Heidegger's break with Husserl. Husserl's philosophy is imbued with universalistic motifs, and is focused on the "development of humanity," of "all humanity," even throughout the patriotic lectures delivered during the war.[98] Nonetheless, during the conflict, this universalism is spiritually guided by Germany, and in the years between the wars, by the entire Western world. It is above all after 1918 that Husserl focuses his attention on the theme of historicity. It would seem that now his aim is to criticize one of the *Kriegsideologie*'s cornerstones: In fact, he describes the developing process of modernity under the banner of the "struggle between newly awakened reason, and the powers of historical reality [*Mächte der historischen Wirklichkeit*]."[99]

This struggle continues with the effort made by philosophy to build "the first internationality starting from culture [*Bildung*] rather than from mere power";[100] this "completely *new internationality*" is presented as "a link created by the spirit of autonomy."[101] *Internationalität*: the term used by Husserl also aims at avoiding any confusion with the existing Communist or Socialist Internationals. Yet, it is interesting to notice that, in order to clarify his point of view, Husserl does not hesitate to use the term "communist," even though only metaphorically. The philosophical community, which constitutes the *leitmotif* of European history at its highest moments, freely and autonomously overcomes social and national barriers without resorting to external constraints. For this reason, this philosophical community is, "so to speak, communist," whereas the forced community that is formed during the Middle Ages under the rule of "priests" is to be considered "imperialistic."[102] For the present, too, what must be created is a "universal association [*Verbindung*] of will which produces a unity of will with no imperialistic organization of it." In other words, what must be chosen is a "communist unity of will" against the "imperialistic" unity of will.[103]

We need only briefly mention that the terms "international" and "communism" were hated by both Nazism and Heidegger, who saw in communism, and its atheism, the climax of the modern corruption o

"historicity" since, "without a god and without gods, a historical *Dasein* is not possible" (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 2). During the last phase of his philosophical development and of his life, Husserl, too, is forced to confront the theme of historicity. In the early 1920s, his philosophy still seems to be very much influenced by the Enlightenment and by its juxtaposition of reason to historico-empirical powers, which were more or less indifferent to reason. In the years following, above all after 1933, Husserl feels the need to radically reinterpret that category of historicity which is by now so central to the philosophy of his former disciple, Heidegger, and which has become part of the regime's ideological arsenal. It is in this context that Husserl's vehement assertion finds its rightful place: He states that "philosophy and science [have the right] to intervene in the concrete historicity [*Geschichtlichkeit*] of humanity in order to bestow upon it a new way of *Dasein* [*Daseinstil*] in accordance with a *Dasein* that is spiritualized and which increasingly finds its fulfillment through philosophical reason."[104]

It is 1934, and Husserl's criticism of Nazism is unmistakable. That *Machtergreifung* which to many, and to Heidegger himself, appears full of promises, seems instead to cast a disturbing shadow upon the diagnosis that Husserl makes of his own time. "At present we are facing the danger of the extinction of philosophy, and therefore the inevitable extinction of a Europe based upon the spirit of truth."[105] By radicalizing the *Kriegsideologie*, the new regime denies the "ideas of 1789," and the ideas of every universalistic philosophy, the right to intervene in the irreducible uniqueness of German culture and essence. This is why the philosophers who are determined to consider themselves officials of a universal rationality appear to Husserl as "totally isolated for the time being."[106] But despite this, they must not renounce the "criticism," the "*epoché* with regards to every historical [*historisch*] tradition." They must not lose sight of the objective which 'European culture' aims at: the construction of the 'universal community' [*Allgemeinschaft*] of earthly humanity, based upon the spirit of autonomous reason. Within this community, "the historical [*historisch*] tasks of every nation, like subordinate moments," find their place. Without this universal and rational tension, European philosophy would deny itself, and its roots, which refer back to "Greek historicity" (*Geschichtlichkeit*).[107]

At this point, it seems that Heidegger, too, and the culture he belongs to, or the culture he influences, are the targets of Husserl's criticism of Nazism. This suspicion comes from the terms he uses, and not

only the term "historicity." We have seen the reclaiming, on the part of philosophy, of the right to intervene in "concrete historicity" in order to profoundly change its *Dasein*. This term recurs very often: "Philosophy is the organ of a new historical *Dasein* [*historisches Dasein*] of humanity, of *Dasein* founded upon the spirit of autonomy." This language is similar to that in *Sein und Zeit*. And when we finally read that even "the problems of so-called existence [*sogenannte Existenz*], both individual and national," are included in "universal theory, that is, in philosophy,"[108] every doubt seems to dissipate. The *Dasein* that had been emphasized by Heidegger, starting from that *da* which underlined its absolute uniqueness and immunity to general rules, can instead be, according to Husserl, radically transformed by philosophical universality.

This is the starting point of the contrast that Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, establishes with Heidegger, the theoretician of a category that he finds not only philosophically debatable, but above all, politically compromised. The historicity regarded as nontranscendable is instead, according to Husserl, an unduly naturalized historicity. If we do not ascribe a "physiological meaning" to the term "life" and instead consider it "a life able to produce spiritual formations . . . , a life that creates culture in the unity of a historicity," it becomes clear that historicity can express itself within "very different communities, simple or articulated such as the family, the nation, and overnational formations" (*Übernation*).[109] An overnational formation is not in and of itself the denial of historicity. Together with the "family" and the "people," the "community of the people" (*Völkergemeinschaft*) is also included, or can be included, within the "essential structures of human historicity."[110]

Human historicity must not be considered as motionless in time: "[A] revolutionizing [*Revolutionierung*] of historicity" is possible, and it does occur. It may consist in the "history of the disappearance of finite humanity within the becoming of a humanity with infinite tasks."[111] Husserl bestows an all but negative meaning to the process of internalization that he believes he observes, at least with regards to the West. "The spiritual *telos* of European humanity" ends up including "the individual *telos* of single nations." This assertion—Husserl points out—is not "a speculative interpretation of our historicity, but the expression of a vivid present sentiment that emerges from a reflection free of any prejudice." What Husserl thinks he can recognize is a reality in progress. On the other hand "actual historical humanity is not always shaped in the same way." Besides the extreme division between "familiarity and extraneousness in relation to

geographical distance and historical development" is "a fundamental category of any historicity."[112] In particular, in Europe (which for Husserl basically coincides with the West), "extraneousness" increasingly yields to "familiarity." *Heimatlichkeit*: it is worth reflecting upon this term. In contrast to what was claimed by many passionate representatives of a clearly conservative or reactionary *Kulturkritik*, the development of modernity and of modern Europe is not the corruption that culminates in the *Heimatlosigkeit*, that is, in the loss of roots and historicity. On the contrary, it is the passage from a narrower to a wider historicity.

On the other hand, the "revolutionizing of historicity" does not only consist in the dislocation of geographical borders; there is a more profound and significant revolution. As philosophy and the theoretical spirit emerge and take root in consciousness, historicity's naturalistic fixation is questioned, regardless of how big its borders are. If we move on to "a universal consideration of the historicity of human *Dasein* [*Geschichtlichkeit des menschlichen Dasein*] in all of its forms of community and in its historical degrees," we realize that there is "one first historicity" (*eine erste Historizität*), intended here in a clearly negative sense: "We are speaking of the natural, primitive [*urwüchsig*] state of mind which is typical of natural life in a primitive way," and which is characterized by stillness and immobility.[113] This criticism seems to target the theoreticians of an immobile historicity and, above all, the enthusiasts of the blood and of the soil. Regardless of its possible racist implications, this ideology is the expression of a naturalistic and "primitive" state of mind that—Husserl seems to highlight this point with reference to Germany—can manifest itself also in "superior cultures." And yet, this primitivism cannot resist history: "[I]n the natural state of mind of historically [*historisch*] factual humanities," sooner or later a situation arises that makes the "revolution" inevitable.[114]

Once this heavy and primitive naturalism has been shaken off, what emerges is not an "empirical historicity" (*empirische Geschichtlichkeit*),[115] but an "absolute historicity" (*absolute Geschichtlichkeit*), typical of a "transcendental community of subjects."[116] At this point the juxtaposition of this historicity to the ideology of blood and soil, as well as to Heideggerian historicity, becomes clear. The latter two themes, of course, must not be confused or blended together, but the fact is that in order to confront Nazism, Husserl must also confront the central categories in Heidegger's philosophy.

## 6. "HISTORICITY" AND THE AUTONOMY OF THEORY: HUSSERL VERSUS HEIDEGGER

Strictly connected to the debate regarding historicity is the debate regarding the role of theory. In his rectorial speech, Heidegger argues against those who insist on exalting the Greeks as "models" of a " 'theoretical' state of mind." "But what is *theoria* for the Greeks? It is defined as the pure scientific consideration [*Betrachtung*] which has ties only to the thing [*Sache*], in its fullness and in its development. Reference to the Greeks is made in order to affirm that this type of scientific consideration must become an end in and of itself. But this reference to the Greeks is wrong."[117] The language used by Heidegger suggests that this criticism is not really generic, but that it is addressed to a specific person or author. Who is it? Already in the 1920s, Husserl had exalted the "immortal glory *of the Greek nation*" which had founded "a type of philosophy that stemmed from purely theoretical interest." This philosophy was inspired by the "pure love of knowledge for the thing [*sachliche Erkenntnis*]," and had paved the way to "an autonomous culture of theoretical reason."[118] This excerpt is taken from an unpublished article, but Heidegger might easily have been familiar with its basic ideas thanks to his relationship with his teacher, or former teacher (as it is known, the author of *Sein und Zeit* also thanks Husserl for allowing him "free access to still unpublished material").[119] What is certain is that two years after Heidegger's speech, Husserl passionately expresses himself again on the theme of theory: He ascribes to the Greeks the merit of having been the first to develop "a purely theoretical state of mind," one that aims at formulating "a 'theoria,' nothing more than a 'theoria,' " which in this way "becomes an end in and of itself."[120] Going back to the rectorial speech: "For the Greeks, science is not a 'cultural good' (*Kulturgut*), but the most intimate determining force of the entire *Dasein* of the people and of the state (*des ganzen volklich-staatlichen Daseins*)."[121] Instead, in the article cited above, Husserl refers to Greek theory, science and philosophy as "an objective realm of goods [*Güterreich*] with no extra-theoretical usefulness."[122]

For Husserl there is indeed a relationship between theory and praxis, but it is a new relationship, one that begins with a pure theoretical interest: "Philosophy is a function of rational praxis; the former is the instrument which leads the latter to the knowledge of real goals. From authentic knowedge [*echtes Wissen*] there follows action."[123] In other words, after having liberated itself from the dominion of vital and natural

praxis, pure theory establishes the norms and the values of a praxis based upon a universal rationality. Certainly, this transcendency of norms and values with regard to historicity cannot be accepted by Heidegger. Indeed, he retorts by saying that the Greeks did not aim "at conforming praxis to theory, but that on the contrary, their goal was to conceive theory itself as the highest achievement of an authentic praxis [*echter Praxis*]."[124] In this sense, far from being the pure contemplation of universal norms and values, theory—or philosophy—is rooted in a concrete historicity where it functions simultaneously as a founding and a determining force. Husserl seems to be familiar with Heidegger's rectorial speech when he insists that the theoretical state of mind, which emerged for the first time in ancient Greece, "is totally unpractical." It "is founded upon a voluntary *epoché* from every natural praxis, and thus also from every higher praxis which intends to serve the natural dimension within professional life." This, however, does not mean that praxis is separated from theory by an abyss. Theory, on the contrary, "becomes a new praxis, a universal critique of any form and goal of life and of every cultural formation." Theory aims at "serving humanity" as a whole, "in a new way,"[125] and not only one specific state or people, as Heidegger thought.

Heidegger, too, seems to be a target of Husserl's criticism of the ruinous change that has occurred in the "spirit of the time" (*Zeitgeist*) in Europe. This change has led to the rejection of the most precious heritage of rationalistic and Enlightenment tradition:

> We have renounced the original meaning of philosophy as a theoretical knowledge of the world; we have rejected the meaning of the individual sciences as branches of philosophy. Pure theory, abstractly conceptual thought, and intellectualism are words which have acquired a pejorative connotation for a wide range of people, and above all for the youth. The youth see themselves called to replace new ideals for those which appear to have been discarded once and for all.[126]

This reference to the ideological crisis of the "youth" is all the more significant if we keep in mind that Heidegger himself[127] made reference to the "young, the youngest force of the people," in his exaltation of Germany's National Socialist change of direction. In affirming that the true significance of Greek theory and science can certainly not be grasped by turning to "international organizations,"[128] Heidegger seems to be targeting Husserl, who, as we know, emphasized the important role of the world's scientific community and of "internationality beginning with culture."

The insistence that science is an autonomous "cultural value" (*Kulturwert*) appears to Heidegger as a "reactionary interpretation [*reaktionäre Deutung*] of science" itself,[129] not only in the sense that it draws from a dulled cultural tendency, but perhaps also because it is in sharp contrast to the German National Socialist revolution. We are citing one of Heidegger's first lectures of the 1935 summer semester. This condemnation, expressed also in political terms, had perhaps already been uttered, and Husserl may very well have kept it in mind during the conference he held in Vienna in May of the same year. There, he clarifies his position with regard to rationalistic tradition which, he argues, should be reformed and renovated, but certainly not rejected. He adds: "I believe that I, the supposed reactionary [*der vermeintliche Reaktionär*], am much more radical and revolutionary than those who nowadays flaunt a merely verbal radicalism."[130] If not a direct response to Heidegger's lecture, this statement undoubtedly takes its aim at the theoreticians of what he considers an overly isolated and motionless "historicity." Husserl, therefore, feels the need to defend himself in advance from the accusations that he professes "an intellectualism lost in a theory estranged from the world," and that he follows the ideal of a "humanity superior to its destiny, and satisfied" with pure scientific contemplation.[131] We know that "destiny" is a key word in the *Kriegsideologie* and in *Sein und Zeit*, and that it is, in fact, strictly linked to the category of "historicity." "Destiny" also plays an important part in the rectorial speech, which is imbued with the pathos of "German destiny"; faced with this destiny, mere theoretical knowledge must give up and admit its own "impotence" (*Unkraft*).[132] In the 1922–23 text, Husserl depicts reason as struggling against "the powers of historical reality" (*Mächte der historischen Wirklichkeit*). In contrast to this, Heidegger's rectorial speech repeatedly insists on the absolute "predominance [over theoretical knowledge] of all the powers which constitute the world [*Übermacht aller weltbildenden Mächte*] of human *Dasein*": the "powers of *Dasein*," which are the powers of "historico-human *Dasein*," of "man's being."[133] Husserl regards all of this as the surrender of reason. Rejecting the accusation of intellectualism and of indifference to "destiny," he declares that he does not want to disregard historicity, but on the contrary, his intention is to "revolutionize" it in a positive and fruitful manner. In this sense, he believes that he can consider himself far more "revolutionary" than his critics, who are tied to a static, naturalistic vision of historicity.

## 7. The Western World: The West and the East

Toward the end of the First World War, a new element intervenes in contrast to the "ideas of 1914." It is the Bolshevik Revolution. On the same day of his abdication, Wilhelm II declares that "faced with the danger that threatens all of Europe, it would be absurd to continue the war. Hopefully, the enemy will eventually recognize the danger bound to strike European civilization if Germany is abandoned to Bolshevism," or if she is forced to accept peace agreements so harsh that Bolshevism's victory is facilitated. The armistice has yet to be signed, and the emperor—or ex-emperor—of the agonizing Second Reich already sees himself leading a crusade against the Bolshevik and Eastern threat.[134] A new theme emerges, partly in contradiction to the preceding topoi: On the one hand the shallow "rationalism" and the even shallower "empiricism" (Latin and Anglo-Saxon, respectively) of the countries to the west of Germany[135] is still denounced. On the other hand, however, there now emerges the pathos of the unity of the West, regarded in its authenticity and defined by its opposition to the threat from the East. There is sometimes an attempt to solve this contradiction by distinguishing, on a linguistic level, between the "liberal Western world [*West*]," that is, the "Roman/Anglo-Saxon"[136] world, and the *Abendland*, the authentic West, which, far from excluding Germany, sees her as its center and guide.

If there is any self-criticism regarding Germany's view of the outcome of the First World War, it is not constituted by the war itself, but by the division and the crisis of the West. In 1931 Jaspers observes:

> Politics as a *selfish calculation of a* territorial *unity of the state* considers everybody else, according to their configuration, as allies or enemies. Against those who are closest to it as far as history and culture, a state sides with those who are most distant. . . . England and France have used Indian and Black troops on the front at the Rhine. Germany would not refuse to side with Russia, if this alliance offered her some possibility to regain her freedom.[137]

The Western world is destroying itself. Undoubtedly—Spengler observes—the appeal to colored people during internal conflicts in the West is nothing new: In the past, the British had resorted to Indian tribes in order to try and subdue the rebel American colonies. And, during the French Revolution, "the Jacobins had mobilized the Haitian

Negroes for the cause of 'man's rights.' " But the "massive" use of colored people during the first world war brings about a radical shift in power relationships, at the expense of the West.[138]

The situation is all the more serious since, even after the war, France still sides with the colored populations of her African colonies; but the fact that Negroes familiarize themselves with the Western art of war dangerously undermines white power.[139] Therefore, Spengler concludes, "it was not Germany, but the West that lost the world war when it lost the respect of the colored peoples."[140] It is above all the Western democracies, Jünger resumes, that now risk the loss of their colonies in exchange for the "war loans of blood and labor" they received from the colored peoples from 1914 to 1918.[141] If anyone can claim victory, complains Spengler, it is Russia, a country that, with the Bolshevik Revolution, has cast off her " 'white' mask" and has become "again a great Asian power, a 'Mongolian' power, burning with 'fiery hate' for Europe." Russia's appeals for revolt, addressed to the colonized countries and peoples, reveal her as an integral part of the "entire colored population of the earth, which she has inspired with the concept of common resistance" and the struggle against "white humanity."[142] It is truly disastrous that, in order to weaken and dismember Germany, France does not hesitate to support the revolutionary uprisings of German communists (who are, at least objectively, in alliance with the Soviet Union), and to side with the colored populations. In conclusion, "Euro-African France"[143] contributes to the mortal danger that threatens the Western world.

Jaspers contrasts to the fatal division that took place during the First World War (and that persists even after the war), a "policy *founded upon a historical consciousness of the whole.* This policy would be able to envision, beyond the interests of any single State, the future interests of existence at large, which are vaguely foreshadowed in the contrast between the Western and the Asiatic nature, between European freedom and Russian fanaticism. Such a policy would not overlook the profound human and spiritual ties that unite the German nature with that of the Latin and Anglo-Saxon peoples, and they would be horrified by the treason which has been perpetrated over and over against these affinities."[144] Within this framework, again with reference to the tragic division of the West, Jaspers complains that war

> is no longer a conflict between opposing faiths, but between opposing interests; not a struggle between authentic civilizations, but between administrative bodies. . . . We no longer reach a historical decision, as

> with, for example, the victory of the Greeks over the Persians, which still represents the foundation of the existence of the Western man's personality, or with the victory of the Romans over the Carthaginians, which consolidated the conquest of the Greeks.[145]

The new Persia that threatens the Western world is clearly the Soviet Union. Jaspers's argument takes on apocalyptic tones: "Today begins *the last campaign against the nobility*. . . . In the past, revolutions could take place without annihilating man; if this one succeeds, it will annihilate man."[146]

## 8. German Historicity and the Unity of the West

The appeal to save the Western world is the *leitmotif* that characterizes Heidegger's support of Nazism and of his subsequent loyalty to the regime. Continuously recurring are the *pathoi* of the "Western man," of "Western *Dasein*" (*abendländisches Dasein*), and of the "Western spiritual force."[147] We must—Heidegger observes in 1937—confront "the imminent uprooting of the West," foil the "threat against the West," and "save" it.[148] After Germany's defeat, Heidegger himself will declare that he embraced Nazism in consideration of the "historical situation of the West," out of a sense of "Western responsibility,"[149] with the hope that Hitler, too, would meet his own "Western responsibility."[150]

Carl Schmitt's position is not very different from Heidegger's. In 1936, he recalls the "great speech," delivered on March 7, at the Reichstag, in which "the Führer and Reichskanzler Adolf Hitler" spoke of the European nations as one single "family," and of Europe as the common "house" of this family. Schmitt emphasizes "the national and *völkisch* kinship among European peoples," in contrast to the peoples who are foreign to Europe and to the West. The latter include Abyssinia—in which Fascist Italy refuses to acknowledge a "homogeneity on the level of civilization"—and the USSR, which Germany's enemies have unfortunately included among the "community of European States."[151] Schmitt criticizes the treaty made by France and the Soviet Union on May 2, 1935, after the latter becomes part of the League of Nations and its Council. In other words, he protests the unravelling of the *cordon sanitaire* that is created immediately after the Bolshevik Revolution. It is within this same context that we must interpret Heidegger's statement, made during the summer semester of 1935, according to which Europe, "in her ruinous blindness, [is] always on the point of cutting her own throat."[152]

For the purpose of better confronting the mortal danger coming from the East and from the colored populations, the West is called to unite. But despite the fact that these texts highlight the need for understanding among (European) peoples, to ascribe to them any keywords and statements in opposition to Nazism would be to lack historical sense.[153] The pathos of the European and Western community, and even the appeal to respect the uniqueness of every (European) population, are themes that, in these years, are present throughout Hitler's speeches. It is true that, when calling for support for Nazi Germany's decision to withdraw from the League of Nations,[154] Heidegger declares that Germany's will to affirm her "autonomous, *völkisch* responsibility" does not mean "parting with the community of the people." In a similar speech made by Hitler on March 21, 1933, we read: The German people "have never separated the sentiment of their own power from their deeply felt responsibility toward the life of the community of European nations." In the above-cited appeal, Heidegger speaks of the "open and virile relationship of autonomy and reciprocity of the peoples and States." An official pamphlet of the Third Reich summarizes a passage from Hitler's speech of May 17, 1933, as such: "National Socialism, as a national movement, has sworn loyalty to its people [*Volkstum*] and, on the basis of its own world vision, respects the national rights of other peoples."[155] Clearly, the goal here is not to reduce Heidegger's positions to those of a politician who was skilled in the art of lying and who, at that time, was aiming at dismantling Versailles and remilitarizing Germany in an effort to achieve a dignity commensurate with the winners of the First World War, while at the same time attempting to avoid their military intervention. And yet, it would be absurd to interpret Heidegger's appeal to support Hitler in his struggle against the League of Nations as an alternative political plan. On the other hand, the presence, in Heidegger's text, of a spiteful rejection of the ideal of an "inconsistent and uncommitted universal fraternization" is quite significant.

Once again, it is necessary to begin our analysis with the *Kriegsideologie*, which, as we have seen, had accused *Zivilisation* and the Entente powers of promoting an aggressive universalism that hardly respected national peculiarities. This *motif*, too, is inherited by Nazism. Modern Christian universalism starts to emerge already with the decline of antiquity, and is only opposed in Germany. According to Böhm, this universalism is guilty of carrying out a furious and unfortunate standardizatior that erases, or means to erase, "every peculiarity in national [*volkhaft*] o

personal characteristics."[156] According to another ideologist of the regime, Heyse, universalism, which takes root in late antiquity and in Christianity, progressively erases "the individual differences among men and peoples."[157] Furthermore, this theme is omnipresent, and has a clearly political dimension in Schmitt: Universalism is clearly synonymous with interventionism and with the "ambition to meddle in world affairs."[158] In this light, man's universal rights are but the theoretical foundation of imperialism, in contrast to which "the sanctity of a nonuniversalistic, vital order based upon ethnicity [*volkhaft*] and respect for people" is exalted.[159] Certainly, Schmitt has in mind the way in which the Entente powers had exploited the theme of man's rights and used it as an ideology of war that justified the sacrifice of millions of people in the name of a crusade against Germany. But the condemnation of this ideology expressed by Schmitt, a political scientist and a Nazi, appears rather instrumental. It is, in fact, exclusively aimed at justifying the Third Reich's right to extend its borders eastward and to build a large imperial and hegemonic sphere without any external interference. Not by chance, in the writings of this period, and already in the title of one of the above-mentioned commentaries, the denunciation of "universalism" is carried out in the name of Germany's "great" vital and cultural "space."

What remains is the persistent vitality, on the eve of the Second World War, of a topos inherited from the first conflict. Heyse writes: " 'World economy,' 'world civilization' [*Weltzivilisation*], 'world revolution' " are just various manifestations of one single ruinous principle.[160] In turn, Schmitt calls for action against both the "universalism of the liberal-democratic Western powers which seek to assimilate peoples, and the universalism of the Boshevik, revolutionary East."[161] We are by now familiar with this topos: If Germany is the country of "historicity," her enemies, both to the East and to the West, are the representatives of an oppressing universalism that lacks historicity. On the other hand, if the Western world in the most profound sense of the word—not to be confused with the West of *Zivilisation*, which coincides with the same leveling, corrupting principle of the communist East—if the Western world is the place of "historicity," it can only be saved by Germany.

This ideology is somehow opposed by Husserl, who broadens the concept of the Western world, or of Europe, to include "the British dominions, the United States, etc."[162] The Western world has achieved such internal unity that it has become a "European supernationality."[163] Moreover, Germany no longer occupies a hegemonic position within it.

According to Husserl, it is not one single country, but "spiritual Europe" as a whole that takes root in the "ancient Greece of the seventh and sixth centuries B.C.," and that serves as "an archon for all of humanity."[164] From the Western world, Husserl not only excludes the Soviet Union and the colonized and semicolonized countries, but some populations who live *within* it as well: "the Indians who are exposed at the sideshows of the fairs, and the Gypsies who wander about Europe."[165] When he pronounced these words in Vienna, on May 7 and 10 in 1935, Husserl had no way of knowing that a few months later the laws of Nuremberg would start to persecute not only the Jews, but also the Gypsies, who were in fact accused of vagrancy.[166] Nor could he know that in the following years, at table conversations, Hitler would make constant reference to the policies applied to Indians by white Americans of European descent, in order to justify his own policy of extermination with regards to certain populations of Eastern Europe and all "inferior" races.[167]

## 9. THE OUTCASTS OF "HISTORICITY": GYPSIES, PAPUANS, AND HOTTENTOTS

Yet, in this objective context, Husserl's position is undoubtedly flawed. In excluding Indians and Gypsies from Europe, he declares that he does not want to follow a merely geographical criterion,[168] but in truth he is revealing his failure to fully develop his criticism of the category of "historicity," that category so dear to Heidegger and, in an obviously different way, to the Nazis. There is proof of this in the fact that, in justification of the exclusion of Gypsies from Europe, he cites their constant wandering. The theme and the rhetoric of roots continue to recur. Husserl extends the borders of Europe and the Western world; he renounces Germany's hegemony, and reinterprets the very category of historicity, trying to relieve it of its naturalistic burden. This burden however, immediately re-emerges when Husserl, still passionately drawn to the pathos of European historicity, starts speaking about the populations that are foreign to Europe: the Indians, the Gypsies, the Eskimos and the Papuans.[169] Despite everything, Husserl is still a prisoner of the myth or cult of the "Western man," or of the "Western *Dasein*." This myth is beloved by Heidegger, but also by Baeumler, who was already exalting the *abendländischer Mensch* many years before becoming one of the Third Reich's ideologists.[170] The "Western man" is even mentioned

by Jaspers,[171] who certainly does not embrace the regime, but who, nonetheless, in 1935 ends an essay on Kant by asserting that the great philosophers' voices will be heard only "as long as Western people live."[172] And finally, Husserl himself speaks of "Western humanity."[173]

Far from being weakened by the massive presence of colonized and colored populations on the front during the First World War, Eurocentric prejudice, which is the heritage of a long history, and colonial tradition in particular, becomes even stronger. Shortly after the outbreak of the conflict, Thomas Mann criticizes the Entente powers for unleashing, against Germany's presumed "barbarity," "Kirghizes, Japanese, Gurkhas, and Hottentots."[174] And later on, Weber exalts the German people as a great people of culture and civilization (*ein großes Kulturvolk*), in contrast to the "Negro from Senegal" (cf. *supra*, chap. 1, § 3), who has been called to fight for Germany's enemies. Germany's culture and political press is not alone in insisting on this theme. As an ally of the countries that have resorted to these populations, Italy shares the advantage that comes from their presence in the conflict. In order to demonstrate the inevitable realistic unscrupulousness of the states' action, Benedetto Croce writes in 1922: "We have seen France quiveringly solicit anyone's help, and celebrate barbarian savages, the Senegalese and the Indian Gurkhas who were trampling on her sweet land."[175]

When speaking about the "Papuan," Husserl seems to have trouble subsuming him under the concept of man:

> The definition of "reason" is very broad. According to the traditional meaning, man is a rational being, and in this sense, the Papuan, too, is a man and not an animal. . . . But in the same way as man, including the Papuan, represents a new degree of animality with regards to animals, so philosophical reason represents a new degree of humanity and reason.[176]

If we understand the category of reason in its strongest and richest meaning, it does not seem proper to include the Papuan in it. Yes, he is a man, but the European represents a higher degree of humanity, the *Kulturmenschheit*, the only one truly able to express a culture and a civilization in the authentic sense.[177]

It is not only Husserl who regards the "Papuan" as a sort of symbol for primitiveness, if not for barbarity. In 1918, Benedetto Croce recalls an anecdote from Antonio Labriola's life: " 'How would you give a Papuan a moral education?' one of us students asked. . . . 'Provisionally (the Herbartian teacher answered with a harshness reminiscent of Vico and

Hegel), provisionally I would make him a slave; and this would be the pedagogy of the case, except that later I would have to see regarding his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. . . .' " Croce seems to agree with Labriola for the most part, at least judging from his assertion that it is necessary to "find a suitable and concrete way to spread culture. And this way can sometimes even mean the *odi profanum vulgus*, and violently pushing people away from the doors of the temple of science, and forcing them to stay out until they become worthy of it."[178] Gramsci's irony, then, becomes clear: we recognize that "primitive people" are mature, or able to quickly become mature, only when we are about to send them to the front, after training them to "use a rifle" rather than "a bow, a boomerang, or a blowgun."[179] And yet, despite expressing some sympathy for the regulating function attributed to Fascism, with his attitude toward the Papuan, Croce places himself in line with liberal tradition. Didn't John Stuart Mill declare that "despotism is a legitimate form of government when dealing with barbarians," though this statement is contained in an essay dedicated, even in the title, to the exaltation of freedom?[180]

If Weber speaks of "civilized people" (*Kulturvolk*) and Husserl of "civilized humanity" (*Kulturmenschheit*), Heidegger speaks, with a similar meaning, of "historical people" (*geschichtliches Volk*),[181] that is, of "historical humankind" (*geschichtliches Menschentum*),[182] with reference to Germany in particular, and the Western world in general. In the same way in which Weber and Husserl present the "Negro from Senegal" and "the Papuan" as the antithesis of civilization, Heidegger presents the "Hottentots."[183] Therefore, what leads Husserl to this grave position is not humanistic universalism,[184] but rather the influence that the cult of uniqueness, inherent in the category of "historicity," continues to bear upon him. With regard to this point, the most significant difference between Husserl and Heidegger is their dissimilar conception of the Western world's geographical borders, and therefore their conception of "historicity" or "civilization," and of the form of this "historicity." The latter is, for Husserl, less imbued with the cult of roots and with ties to the soil than it is for Heidegger. What follows from this is that Heidegger sees even the Western world, in the strictest sense of the word, as threatened by the risk of "historical death" and "the loss of historicity" as a consequence of the ruinous leveling and uprooting process caused by "democracy" and modernity (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 2).

First the outbreak of the war, which is interpreted and experienced as the clash between opposed cultures, or even between civilization and bar

barism; then the terror and anguish caused by the Bolshevik Revolution and by the call for the uprising of the colonized peoples, which incites the impulse to rebel: all of this meshes with the consolidated Eurocentrism of colonialistic tradition, and causes a pathos of the Western world and civilization. The latter two undergo countless re-definitions, but they always remain in opposition to those who are excluded from the Western world or from civilization. The Western world is firmly identified with civilization, and is called upon not only to defend itself from external threats, but also to preserve its own purity. Unfortunately, Spengler observes, France does not hesitate to regard the Negroes and the populations of her colonies as *frères de couleur*; "in contrast to the Germanic sense of race, the French one does not rebel against the recognition of Negroes as equal," and does not even oppose "mixed marriages."[185] In one of Jaspers's texts of 1931 we read: "Races intermingle. Historical civilizations and cultures are uprooted and plunge into the technico-economic world, and into a vacant intellectualism."[186] And yet, in the same text, Jaspers, perhaps referring to anti-Semitism in particular, condemns the "theory of races" (cf. *infra*, chap. 4, § 4). In his vigorous defense of the Jews, Jaspers highlights their great contribution to Western culture and history. Their subsumption under the Western world seems to be the presupposition, if not of safety and physical integrity, at least of full political and civil rights.

Nazism, instead, will end up considering the Jews foreign to the Western world, and with them, not only the Gypsies and the Indios, but also the populations of Eastern Europe. In this way, the nominalistic corruption of the concept of man reaches its extreme conclusion. The least refined of the ideologists, and Carl Schmitt himself during the least glorious moment of his career, no longer contrast the universal concept of man to that of "Western man"; they now speak, even more curtly, of the "German man."[187] According to Hitler, if one must speak of man's rights, it is clear that the only authentic and "*most sacred right of man*" consists in preserving purity and ensuring the development of the "best type of man" (*bestes Menschentums*).[188]

## 10. The "Metaphysical People" and the Salvation of the Western World

The pathos of the Western world is strictly linked, in Heidegger, with that of "German essence" and "German destiny."[189] Clearly, Germany

has a role, a unique mission to accomplish. The opposition between the East and the West, and the appeal for a renewed salvation of the West founded upon the example given by the Greeks in ancient times, constitute a central theme in Heidegger's works at this time. The reference to Hellenism is not, and cannot be, a unifying element for all of humanity, but it serves to define the fighting parties: "Heraclitus's name" is not "the formula for the concept of a humanity which encompasses the entire world in its embrace (*Allerweltmenschheit an sich*). It is, rather, the name for a primal power of Western-Germanic historical existence, in its first confrontation with the Asian element."[190] Heidegger continuously refers back to this first confrontation between the Western world and Asia, this *Auseinandersetzung* that led Greece to settle with her colonies on the coast of Asia Minor. "We must not forget—he writes in 1937—that the Greeks did not become what they are and will be forever by secluding themselves in their 'space.' Only through the harshest, but creative, confrontation with the element which was most alien and hostile to them, that is, with the Asian element, did they rise to the brief course of their historical uniqueness and greatness."[191]

Jacob Burckhardt, an author with whom Heidegger is familiar, writes: "Only through the open and glorious struggle against Persia did the Greeks gain awareness of their antithesis to the barbarians."[192] Heidegger always has this antithesis in mind, and constantly updates it. During a lecture on Hölderlin held in 1934–35, he makes it clear that the "Führer" is reminiscent of the demigods (*Halbgötter*), that "being Führer is a destiny [*Schicksal*]," and that " 'destiny' is the name for the demigods' being." Later on, he feels the need to add that the destiny he is talking about (as an "essential German word") has nothing to do with the "Asian representation of destiny." He regards the latter as the "bustling about [*Dahintreiben*], irresolutely and unawares, in a dull fate [*Verhängnis*] that simply routs one [*einfach dahinwälzend*] within the totality [*Allheit*] of the self-contained being."[193]

In insisting on the antithesis between Asia on one side and Greece and Germany (and Europe) on the other, Heidegger expresses the wish that "the great decision regarding Europe" will not occur "through annihilation" (*auf dem Wege der Vernichtung*),[194] and that the fratricida clash of the First World War will not repeat itself. However, the reciprocal understanding among European peoples, he admonishes, is possible only if each one of them becomes aware of their "historical mission": "The fundamental characteristic of their mission is defined for th

Western peoples who create history from the present international moment, as the salvation of the Western world." Only through "extreme decisions" is it possible to foil "the threat of a complete uprooting and of general confusion in the West."[195] And in this regard, an important role must be played by Germany, which occupies the "center" (*Mitte*) of Europe (and the West): "her people have the greatest number of neighbors, and therefore, they are the most threatened." They feel most deeply and most painfully the "pincers" between which Europe and the West have been trapped by the USSR and the United States. On a philosophical level, these two countries represent the same principle, which consists in the unleashing of technique and in the "transformation of man into a mass."[196]

In Aristotle, Heidegger reads that the "Hellenic race occupies a central position" (*meseuei*), being, as Burckhardt comments, "in the middle [*Mitte*], between two types of barbarians."[197] The central position between the modern barbarians (the Soviet Union and the United States) is now occupied by Germany and by Europe. The idea that both the USSR and the United States express the same metaphysical principle is the inevitable conclusion of the *Kriegsideologie*, which had exalted Germany's struggle against the rampant "Mammonism"[198] in England and in America. The United States is characterized, according to Weber, by the "romanticism of quantity"[199] and, according to Wilamowitz, by the "tyranny of money."[200] Wilhelm II himself enters the debate in order to incite the Germans to settle the conflict between the two opposed "conceptions of the world" by defeating once and for all the Anglo-Saxon one, and the "idolatry of money" that characterizes it.[201] The state that emerges out of the Bolshevik Revolution is immediately subsumed under the same categories, although with some slight modifications. We will only cite a few examples. Spengler accuses Marx of thinking "in a purely British way" (that is, through the categories of a "mercantile people"),[202] and denounces "socialism as . . . *nothing more than the capitalism of the lower class.* Both Cobden's Manchesterian theory of the free market and Marx's communist system are born out of the England of 1840."[203] In turn, Sombart, after launching the slogan "heroes against merchants" (Germans against British) during the war, in 1924 accuses modern, "proletarian" socialism of being imbued with "Roman-Anglo-Saxon spirit," which is clearly characterized by "standardization" (*Massenhaftigkeit*) and by the "quantification of life's value."[204] It seems that, though only on an ideological level, even after

the war the campaign against "merchants" continues. Their number had increased with the arrival of the Bolsheviks. After all, one can speak of "business" and mercantile "morals" (*Geschäftsmoral*) also with regards to Marx's theories.[205] The expression *Geschäftsmoral* comes from Spengler, for whom it is unquestionable that in the USSR, as well as in the United States, "life has a merely economical structure, with no depth [*Tiefe*] to it."[206] It is within this framework that we can locate Heidegger's *Einführung in die Metaphysik*: The true nature of the modern world results from the repulsive spectacle offered by the United States and the Soviet Union, and its "predominant dimensions" are "extension," "number," and "quantity"; it is an existence that lacks "any depth" (*jede Tiefe*).[207]

According to Heidegger, the German people, the "metaphysical people" *par excellence*,[208] rise against all of this. At this point—in 1935—the term "metaphysics" is not yet burdened with the negative connotation that it will acquire later; it is precisely this discourse that reveals its continuity with respect to the topoi of the First World War. During the first conflict, Thomas Mann refers to the German people as the "people of metaphysics." He then contrasts Germany to the mechanical, "antimetaphysical" position of Western democracies and to their "mere culture of utility."[209] But in the Weimar years, Mann, by now a lucid critic of the turbid ideology that is circulating in his country, moves drastically away from that which he now defines and condemns as the "ideology of war" (*Kriegsideologie*). He is clearly set to dismantle the very same topoi he had helped to spread during the war. He criticizes those who insist on the incompatibility between their own "German spirit" on the one hand, and democracy and socialism, with their "economic materialism," on the other. To this, he objects that "democracy can be something more German than the imperial pomp of operettas," and that, far from being synonymous with superficiality, democracy can well "have depth [*Niveau*], even the depth of German romanticism."[210] While the persistent *Kriegsideologie* continues to thunder against the mercantile spirit, Mann cites Novalis's passionate praise of the *Handelsgeist* (business spirit) as the "spirit of culture" (*Geist der Kultur*).[211] These quotations and references do not attempt to provide a rigorous historical reconstruction, but they respond to a need for cultural policies. We are in the presence of an effort that aims at restoring the right of citizenship to everything that the *Kriegsideologie* had patriotically expelled.

And yet, this effort is not very successful: After all, Mann is well aware

of going against the current. Immediately after the end of the war, Jaspers defines the "liberalism" of Western countries as "a-metaphysical" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 1). A few years later, Sombart declares that "the German spirit is *metaphysical*," in opposition to the deafness typical of the Anglo-Saxon and Latin peoples who are unable to perceive the dimension of "transcendence" (referred to in a broad sense).[212] In the 1930s, the increasing popularity of Nazi ideology in German universities is favored by the vision, widely spread among professors and students, of the German people as a "metaphysical" people, in violent contrast to the superficiality of the democratic, mechanistic Western world.[213] Two years after the Nazis' rise to power, the same year in which *Einführung in die Metaphysik* is published, Heyse observes that "the Germanic people stand as the bearers *par excellence* of life's metaphysical values."[214]

## NOTES

1. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Gesinnungen* (München-Lepzig; Duncker & Humblot, 1915), p. 18.

2. Ernst Troeltsch, "Über einige Eigentümlichkeiten der angelsächsichen Zivilisation" (1916), in *Deutscher Geist und Westeuropa* (Tübingen, 1925), p. 115.

3. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes. Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (1938), pp. 41ff.

4. Arthur Moeller van der Bruck, *Das Dritte Reich* (Berlin, 1923), p. 87. As for Georg Quabbe, cf. A. Möhler, *Die konservative Revolution in Deutschland 1918–1932: Ein Handbuch* (Darmstadt, 1989), p. 112.

5. Friedrich Meinecke, *Die Entstehung des Historismus* (München, 1965), pp. 274–81.

6. Karl Mannheim, "Das konservative Denken. Soziologische Beiträge zum Werden des politisch-historischen Denkens in Deutschland" (1927), in *Wissensoziologie: Auswahl aus dem Werk*, ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Berlin, 1964), pp. 408–508 (in particular, p. 466).

7. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (München, 1933), pp. 8, 85; and *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (München, 1980), p. 1063.

8. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, p. 28.

9. Ibid., pp. 32, 613.

10. Sombart, *Händler und Helden*, p. 141.

11. Werner Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus ("Marxismus")* vol. 1, (Jena, 1924), p. 252.

12. Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Stuttgart: Bibliothek der Moderne,

1982), pp. 14, 22ff. In 1951, Jünger will explicitly quote Burke (cf. De Waldgang," in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7 [Stuttgart, 1978], p. 297), but Burke' direct or indirect influence is mostly powerful between the wars.

13. Joseph de Maistre, "Considérations sur la France" (1797), in *Ouvr complètes*, vol. 1 (Lyon, 1884), p. 74.

14. Mannheim, "Das konservative Denken," p. 467.

15. G. Anders, "Nihilismus und Existenz" (1946), in Guido Schnee berger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumente zu seinem Leben and Denken* (Bern 1962), p. 267.

16. About this, and on the considerations on Nietzsche made in thi chapter, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Nietzsche, il moderno e la tradizione liberale, in *Metamorfosi del moderno*, eds. Gian Mario Cazzaniga, Domenico Losurdc and Livio Sichirollo (Urbino, 1988), pp. 115–40 (in particular, pp. 126ff.) Sig nificantly enough, Heidegger's nominalism is highlighted, exalted, and place on the same line with Burke and de Maistre by a major representative of th French Nouvelle Droite: cf. Alain de Benoist, "Fondements nominalistes d'un attitude devant la vie," in *Les idées à l'endroit* (Paris, 1979), pp. 31ff. On the cat egory of "anthropological nominalism," cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Realismu und Nominalismus als politische Kategorien," in *Philosophie als Verteidigung d Ganzen der Vernunft*, eds. Domenico Losurdo and Hans G. Sandkühler (Köln 1988), pp. 170–96; and Domenico Losurdo, "Il concetto di uomo tra Marx il liberalismo," in *Mondoperaio*, (August–September 1989): 123–32.

17. Alfred Baeumler, "Nietzsche" (1930), in *Studien zur deutschen Gei tesgeschichte* (Berlin, 1937), p. 247.

18. Hans Heyse, *Idee und Existenz* (Hamburg, 1935), pp. 140ff, 104, 14

19. Karl Löwith, "Mein Leben" in *Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ei Bericht* (Stuttgart, 1986), pp. 36, 141n. 15.

20. Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 27 in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. (Frankfurt, 1980), p. 171; English translation, *Being and Time*, trans. Joh Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), p. 166

21. Martin Heidegger, "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers 'Psychologie de Weltanschauungen,' " in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, p. 32.

22. Alfred Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzi 1931), p. 130. The passage cited by Baeumler is contained in the first version c the preface to *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1871). Cf. Friedrich Nietzsch *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzin Montinari, vol. 7 (München-Berlin–New York), p. 355.)

23. Søren Kierkegaard, "Eine literarische Anzeige" (1846), Germa translation from the original Danish, in *Gesammelte Werke*, eds. Emanuel Hirsc and Hayo Gerdes (Gütersloh, 1983), vol. 17, pp. 89–97.

24. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, ed. Hanno He bling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), pp. 242, 108, 163.

25. Carl Schmitt, *Über die drei Arten des rechtswissenschaftlichen Denke*

(Hamburg, 1934) p. 44. In this essay, Schmitt seems to take a stand against "nominalism" in the legal and political field, in the name of the concreteness of the political community (pp. 8ff). In reality, this emphasis on concrete historicity is developed precisely on the basis of the nominalistic disintegration of the universal concept of man. Sombart falls into the same misunderstanding, as he criticizes at the same time Marx's "nominalism" (cf. *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 1, pp. 151ff), and his *pathos* of the unity of humankind (pp. 242–53).

26. Carl Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk* (Hamburg, 1933), p. 44.

27. Carl Schmitt, *Nationalsozialismus und Völkerrecht* (Berlin, 1934), p. 7.

28. Carl Schmitt, "Faschistische und nazionalsozialistische Rechtswissenschaft," *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung*, (1936): 619.

29. Carl Schmitt, "Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen" (1929), in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles 1929–1939* (Hamburg, 1940), p. 124.

30. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 314.

31. Ibid., p. 121; and Franz Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 42, 53.

32. Franz Böhm, "Gegenwärtigkeit und Transzendenz der Geschichte," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturphilosophie. Neue Folge des Logos* 1 (1935): 159–78 (in particular, p. 178).

33. R. Craemer, "Geschichtswissenschaft und politischer Geist," *Zeitschrift für deutsche Kulturphilosophie. Neue Folge des Logos* 1 (1935): 179–201 (in particular pp. 179, 199ff.)

34. Otto F. Bollnow, "Zum Begriff der Ganzheit bei Othmar Spann," *Finanzarchiv. Neue Folge* 6, no. 2 (1938): 271–315 (in particular, p. 286).

35. Ibid., p. 304.

36. Ibid., p. 315.

37. Oswald Spengler, *Der Mensch und die Technik: Beitrag zu einer Philosophie des Lebens* (München, 1971), p. 9.

38. Bollnow, "Zum Begriff der Ganzheit bei Othmar Spann," p. 305.

39. Ernst Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis" (1922), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, pp. 49ff.

40. Ibid., pp. 11ff.

41. In a 1933 essay, Bollnow declares that his attempt is to investigate the problems that arise "in the field of Heidegger's philosophy." Cf. Otto F. Bollnow, "Über Heideggers Verhältnis zu Kant," *Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Jugendbildung* (1933): p. 222.

42. Heidegger, "Anmerkungen zu Karl Jaspers," p. 11.

43. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 18ff, 15.

44. Heidegger's "letter to Carl Schmitt," dated August 22, 1933, was published in *Telos* 72 (1987): 132. In Italy, right after the outbreak of the First World War, Giovanni Gentile makes reference to Heraclitus as a support for his

interventionist position: cf. "La filosofia della guerra," in *Opere*, ed. Hervé A Cavallera (Firenze, 1989), p. 3.

45. Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus*, p. 113.

46. Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker*, p. 67.

47. Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis," p. 49.

48. Cf. "Adolf Hitlers Geheimrede vor dem "Militärischen Führernachwuchs" vom 30 Mai 1942," in *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, ed. Henry Picker (Frankfurt a.M.–Berlin, 1989), p. 491.

49. Ibid., p. 492.

50. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1937) pp. 22, 40, 136.

51. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, pp. 456, 52ff, *passim*.

52. Ibid., p. 48.

53. Ibid., pp. 375, 51.

54. Ibid., pp. 50, 48.

55. Ibid., p. 51.

56. Ibid., p. 161.

57. Ibid., p. 575.

58. Ibid., p. 43.

59. Ibid., p. 51.

60. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 43.

61. Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Leipzig, 1929).

62. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Ansprache. Ein Appell an der Vernunft in *Essays*, ed. Hermann Kurzke (Franfurt a.M., 1986), p. 115.

63. Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 136ff.

64. Ibid., p. 2.

65. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 293.

66. Cf. Löwith, *Mein Leben*, p. 50.

67. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 43.

68. Cf. Jacques Derrida, *De l'esprit: Heidegger et la question* (Paris, 1987)

69. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 63.

70. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 17, 11.

71. Ibid., pp. 15, 13ff.

72. Ibid., pp. 14, 16, 12.

73. In Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 180ff.

74. Martin Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 40, p. 42.

75. Ibid., p. 50. Cf. also Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 14.

76. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 50.

77. Martin Heidegger, "Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 29–30, p. 259.

78. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung abendländischen Denken," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 44, p. 150.

79. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 10, pp. 61–67; *Being and Time*, pp. 72, 74.

80. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," p. 127.

81. Löwith, *Mein Leben*, p. 57.

82. Jürgen Habermas, "Heidegger: Werk und Weltanschauung, Vorwort," in *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Victor Farias (Frankfurt, 1989), p. 13.

83. Christoph Steding, *Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur* (Hamburg, 1938), p. 129. Heidegger's influence on Steding is emphasized in the introduction (p. xvii) by Walter Frank, who was president of the Reich's institute for the history of the new Germany, and who was on very good terms with Rosenberg (cf. Léon Poliakov and Joseph Wulf, *Das Dritte Reich und seine Denker* [München, 1978], p. 51, *passim*).

84. Steding, *Das Reich und die Krankheit*, pp. 71, 125, 143, 395, *passim*.

85. Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus*, pp. 96, 98, 144, 194.

86. Ibid., pp. 158ff.

87. Ibid., pp. 98ff.

88. Ibid., p. 144.

89. Ibid., pp. 32ff. The fact that "*da ist*" is already in quotation marks in Böhm's text could be an indirect citation.

90. Schmitt, *Staat, Bewegung, Volk*, pp. 44ff. Schmitt does not explicitly quote Mannheim, and yet, after the big debate stirred by *Ideologie und Utopie*, the category of *Seinsgebundenheit* was already a quotation in itself: cf. Karl Mannheim, *Ideologie und Utopie*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt, 1952), p. 71.

91. Carl Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierung (1939). Zu Christoph Steding 'Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur,' " in *Positionen und Begriffe*, pp. 271–95.

92. Martin Heidegger, "Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität)" (1923), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 63, pp. 81–83.

93. Ibid., p. 82.

94. With regard to Marcuse's enthusiasm for *Sein und Zeit*, cf. his "Beiträge zu einer Phänomenologie des historischen Materialismus," which appeared in *Philosophische Hefte* (1928, in a special issue of the journal entirely dedicated to Heidegger's masterpiece. As for the relation established by Marcuse between *Sein und Zeit* and Marxism, there is a somewhat amused mention of it in a letter written by Jaspers to Heidegger himself: the letter is dated July 8, 1928, in Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963*, eds. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (Frankfurt, 1990), p. 102.

95. With regard to this discourse, cf. Losurdo, "Realismus und Nominalismus."

96. Herbert Marcuse, "Der Kampf gegen den Liberalismus in der totalitären Staatsauffassung," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* (1934): 185–88.

97. Heidegger, "Ontologie," p. 75; and "Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs" (1925), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 20, p. 119.

98. Edmund Husserl, "Fichtes Menschheitsideal," in *Aufsätze und*

*Vorträge (1922–1937)*, eds. Thomas Nenon and Hans R. Sepp, *Husserliana*, vol. 27 (Den Haag, 1987), pp. 283, 292ff.

99. Edmund Husserl, ["Zur Idee absoluter Rechtfertigung"], in *Aufsätze und Vorträge*, (1922–1937) p. 106.

100. Edmund Husserl, ["Über die gegenwärtige Aufgabe der Philosophie"] (1934), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 207.

101. Edmund Husserl, "An den Präsidenten des VIII Internationalen Philosophenkongresses Herrn Prof. Dr. Rádl in Prag" (1934), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 240.

102. Edmund Husserl, "Formale Typen der Kultur in der Menschheitsentwicklung" (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 90. In this context, one can better understand the criticism made in 1924 against the "Catholic International" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 1), which was clearly considered too hierarchic, and therefore not without "imperialistic" aspects.

103. Edmund Husserl, "Erneuerung und Wissenschaft" (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 53 and n.

104. Husserl, ["Über die gegenwärtige Aufgabe der Philosophie"], p. 207.

105. Husserl, "An den Präsidenten," p. 242.

106. Ibid., p. 244.

107. Ibid., pp. 240–43, *passim*.

108. Ibid., pp. 240ff.

109. Edmund Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschentums und die Philosophie" (1935), in *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, ed. W. Biemel, *Husserliana*, vol. 6 (Den Haag, 1954), pp. 314ff.

110. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, p. 262.

111. Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschentums," p. 325.

112. Ibid., pp. 320ff.

113. Ibid., pp. 326ff.

114. Ibid., p. 327.

115. Husserl, "An den Präsidenten," p. 241.

116. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, p. 262.

117. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 11ff.

118. Husserl, "Formale Typen," pp. 83-.

119. Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, note to § 7 C, p. 52.

120. Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschentums," pp. 326–28.

121. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 12.

122. Husserl, "Formale Typen," p. 85.

123. Ibid., p. 87.

124. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 12.

125. Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschentums," pp. 328ff.

126. Husserl, ["Über die gegenwärtige Aufgabe der Philosophie"], p. 208

127. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 19.

128. Ibid., p. 12.

129. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 52.

130. Husserl, "Die Krisis der europäischen Menschentums," p. 337.

131. Ibid.

132. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 10, 11, 12, 15.

133. Ibid., pp. 15, 17, 13, 16.

134. Cf. Maurice Beaumont, *La Faillite de la paix*, vol. 1 (Paris, 1967), p. 32.

135. Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 1, p. 84.

136. Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierung," p. 275; Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 1, p. 84.

137. Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin, 1947), p. 97.

138. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 151.

139. Oswald Spengler, "Frankreich und Europa" (1924), in *Reden und Aufsätze*, ed. Ildegard Kornhardt (München, 1937), p. 84.

140. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 151.

141. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 254.

142. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 150.

143. Spengler, "Frankreich und Europa," p. 88, *passim*.

144. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 97; English translation, *Man in the Modern Age*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1957), p. 120 (modified).

145. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 82; *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 101 (modified).

146. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 174.

147. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 11, 19; "Wege zur Aussprache" (1937), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 13, p. 16.

148. Heidegger, "Wege zur Aussprache," pp. 20. 16.

149. Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933–34: Tatsachen und Gedanken," published as an appendix to *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 24, 28.

150. Letter to C. von Dietze dated December 15, 1945, and published in Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt–New York, 1988), p. 312.

151. Schmitt, "Die siebente Verwandlung des Genfer Völkerbundes" and "Sprengung der Locarno-Gemeinschaft durch Einschaltung der Sowiets," *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung* 41 (1936): 787–89, 337–41.

152. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 40; English translation, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 37 (modified).Heidegger closely follows the political events; for example, right after this observation, he hints at the "attack against a king in France" (the murder, on October 9, 1934, of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia, who was on a visit to Paris). Also with regard to his later lectures, the constant reference to political life (cf. Nicolae Tertulian's dense essay published on *Quinzaine littéraire* on 15–31 December, 1987) frustrates the

attempts of those who insist on relegating Heidegger's theories into a rarefied sphere, totally removed from the political contingencies.

153. Cf. also Henri Crétella, "Heidegger contre le nazisme," *Le Débat* 48 (1988): 125.

154. In Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger*, pp. 144–46.

155. Cf. Georg Usadel, *Zeitgeschichte in Wort und Bild: Vom Alten zum Neuen Reich*, vol. 4 (Oldenburg-Berlin 1942), pp. 38, 71.

156. Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus*, pp. 38, 16.

157. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 145.

158. Carl Schmitt, "Großraum gegen Universalismus" (1939), in *Positionen und Begriffe*, p. 295.

159. Carl Schmitt, "Der Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht" (1939), in *Positionen und Begriffe*, pp. 306, 304.

160. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 146.

161. Schmitt, "Der Reichsbegriff," p. 304.

162. Husserl, "Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums," p. 318.

163. Ibid., p. 322.

164. Ibid., pp. 321, 336.

165. Ibid., p. 318ff.

166. On all this, cf. Henriette Asseo, "La spécificité de l'extermination des Tziganes," in *Révision de l'histoire; totalitarismes, crimes and génocides nazis*, eds Yannis Thanassekos and Heinz Wismann (Paris, 1990), pp. 131–43.

167. With regard to this, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Marx e la storia de totalitarismo," *Storia e problemi contemporanei* 6 (1990): 41–61.

168. Husserl, "Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums," p. 318.

169. Ibid., pp. 318ff., 337.

170. Alfred Baeumler, "Bamberg und Naumburg" (1925), in *Studien*, p. 35

171. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 15.

172. Karl Jaspers, "Das radikal Böse bei Kant" (1935), in *Aneignung und Polemik:Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hans Saner (München, 1968), p. 204.

173. Edmund Husserl, "Erneuerung. Ihr Problem und ihre Methode" (1923), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 4.

174. Thomas Mann, "Gedanken im Kriege," in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 36.

175. Benedetto Croce, "Frammenti di etica" (1922), in *Etica e politica* (Bari, 1966), p. 143.

176. Husserl, "Die Krisis des europäischen Menschentums," p. 337ff.

177. Husserl, "Erneuerung. Ihr Problem und ihre Methode," p. 5.

178. Benedetto Croce, *Conversazioni critiche* (Bari, 1918), pp. 60ff.

179. Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni dal carcere*, ed. Valentino Gerratan (Torino, 1975), p. 1367.

180. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London, 1926), p. 6.

181. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 13.

182. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " in Gesamtausgabe, vol. 53, p. 68; "Parmenides," in ibid., vol. 54, p. 250.

183. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 17.

184. As Derrida appears to believe in *De l'esprit*.

185. Spengler, "Frankreich und Europa," p. 84.

186. Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit*, p. 68; *Man in the Modern Age*, p. 85 (modified).

187. In Wilhelm Stapel, printed in Poliakov and Wulf, eds., *Das Dritte Reich*, p. 65.

188. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1939), p. 444.

189. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 10, 15, and 16.

190. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 39, p. 134.

191. Martin Heidegger, "Wege zur Aussprache," p. 21.

192. Jacob Burkhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, 5th ed., ed. Johann J. Oeri, vol. 1 (Berlin-Stuttgart, 1898–1902), p. 322. The "Basel lectures, Greek culture and the influence, both positive and negative, that it had on Nietzsche, are referred to in the 1936–37 and 1942–43 lectures; cf. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 43, p. 122; and "Parmenides," p. 134. During the last years of his life, Heidegger will again make reference to Burkhardt and to his criticism of democracy (analyzed and denounced already from its genesis in Greece); cf. Heinrich W. Petzet, *Auf einen Stern zugehen: Begegnungen mit Martin Heidegger 1929 bis 1976* (Frankfurt a.M., 1983), p. 232.

193. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Germanien' und 'Der Rhein,' " pp. 172ff, 210.

194. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 42.

195. Heidegger, "Wege zur Aussprache," p. 16.

196. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," pp. 40-43; English translation, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 38 (modified).

197. Aristotle, *Politics*, VII, 6; Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, vol. 1, p. 319.

198. Georg Simmel, *Der Krieg und die geistigen Entscheidungen* (München-Leipzig, 1917), pp. 14ff.

199. Max Weber, "Demokratie und Aristokratie im amerikanischen Leben" (1918), in *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg: Schriften und Reden 1914–1918*, eds. Wolfgang J. Momsen and Gangolf Hübinger (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), p. 355. It is true that, already in "Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus" (1904–05), *Gesammelte Aufsatze zur Religionssoziologie*, 6th ed. vol. 1 (Tübingen, 1972), pp. 35, 81, reference is made, with regard to the United States, to a "romanticism of numbers" and to a people whose "imagination is directed merely towards measurable quantities." And yet, in this text, Weber's

value judgement is more ambiguous, since American "traders are in their own way poets." In the 1918 text, instead, Weber adds (cf. *supra*, chap. 6, § 5) that the United States lack "historical destiny." In "Die protestantische Ethik" it is still asserted that "appealing to the national character . . . is . . . generally equivalent to confessing one's ignorance." On the contrary, immediately after the First World War, the contrast "between the value of German culture and of French culture" is regarded as an "antagonism between different divinities" over which "destiny" dominates (cf. *supra*, chap. 1, § 6; chap. 2, § 7).

200. In Luciano Canfora, *Cultura classica e crisi tedesca: Gli scritti politici di Wilamowitz 1914–1931* (Bari, 1977), p. 77.

201. Fritz Fischer, *Griff nach der Weltmacht* (Düsseldorf, 1961), p. 543.

202. Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (München, 1921), p. 71.

203. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, pp. 101ff.

204. Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 1, pp. 84–89.

205. Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus*, p. 75.

206. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 48.

207. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 49.

208. Ibid., p. 41.

209. Mann, "Gedanken im Kriege," p. 30; *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, pp. 484, 241.

210. Thomas Mann, *Von deutscher Republik: Politische Schriften und Reden in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1984), vol. 17, pp. 73, 80.

211. Ibid., p. 83.

212. Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 1, p. 84.

213. Helmut Kuhn, "Die deutsche Universität am Vorabend der Machtergreifung," in *Die deutsche Universität im Dritten Reich* (München, 1966), p. 15: reprinted in Victor Farias, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1989), pp. 131ff, 412.

214. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 345.

*F O U R*

# War, Revolution, and Conspiracy

## 1. The Bolshevik Revolution and the "Judaic-Bolshevik" Conspiracy

The First World War witnesses the traumatic intervention of colored populations in the conflict. Even more traumatic than this is the Bolshevik Revolution: Suddenly Russia casts off what Spengler calls her white mask, and she begins pursuing alliances with colonized nations and peoples, inciting them to rebel against their rulers. Throughout Germany, a theme begins to circulate that envisions the West as a fortress under siege by a giant horde of enemies to include, with increasing frequency, the Jews. Before going any further with our analysis of the *Kriegsideologie*, however, we should note that the topoi of the "the ideology of war," as well as those that are sparked by the Bolshevik Revolution, are hardly limited to Germany, though they appear darker and more deeply rooted there than in other places.

To the west of Germany there is also a diffuse sense of anxiety associated with the decline of the West and of civilization. According to Winston Churchill, the Bolsheviks have brought their country—and threaten to do so to others—back to "a barbaric condition . . . worse than the stone age." Galvanized by revolutionary agitation is the "underground of large cities in Europe and America." The condemnation of the metropolis, of the city, as the locale of subversive activity and uprooting is a theme that takes on great importance in German culture and propaganda. But even the theme of socialism as the slaves' revolt, a theme

reminiscent of Nietzsche, seems to come to light in some of Churchill's expressions.

Such a terrible threat to Western culture and civilization must of course consist of secret plots and pervasive, clandestine alliances. Public opinion denounces the Bolshevik Revolution as the result of a supposed Judaic-Bolshevik plot, even in nations with established liberal traditions (in England, *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* is supposedly printed by the "official press of His Majesty"). Indeed, this is the opinion of many one might never suspect, leaders and people of great prestige, to include Winston Churchill. Churchill calls for resistance to "the world-wide conspiracy to overturn civilization," one of the aims of the French Revolution, assisted by the Jews. Anti-Semitism even makes its way across the Atlantic to America: It gathers support from Henry Ford, the author of a sort of anti-Semitic *bestseller* that is immediately translated into German. In Germany, it enjoys quite a bit of success, even after Ford is forced to backstep due to public reaction in the United States.

The threat to the West also targets unique national traditions, upon the ruins of which the Bolsheviks intend to erect an "International Republic," largely contaminated by Judaism.[1] And so another topos is revealed (that of the international or stateless Jew) that in Germany will be consecrated in blood. It is necessary to consider the evolution of the ideologies of countries such as England and America in order to better understand its development in Germany. Otherwise, it would not be possible to contextualize facts that, at least initially, are rather surprising. As we will see below, in 1933, Spengler attempts to distance himself from the "anti-Semitism in Europe and in America," though he warmly welcomes the recent Nazi rise to power and is hardly immune—to say the least—to the very disease that he condemns in others.

Naturally, emphasizing the international dimensions of certain ideological phenomena is not meant to deny the uniqueness, and the unique virulence and brutality with which these ideologies develop and evolve in Germany. Perhaps we may now address Germany more closely without falling victim to historiographic stereotypes.

## 2. JEWS, *ZIVILISATION*, AND REVOLUTION

On the eve of the First World War, one of the key figures of the *Kriegsideologie*, Sombart, begins to attach the same stereotypes to Jews that wil

eventually be applied to Germany's enemies. In 1911, according to Sombart, the Jews, more than anyone else, personify the characteristics of those "merchants" (*Händler*) against whom German "heroes" prepare to engage in mortal combat. And the mercantile spirit becomes synonymous with exclusive attention to quantity, "numbers," "utility," and "practical rationalism,"[2] qualities which are ultimately interpreted as banausic, antimetaphysical, and characteristic of calculative thought.

That's not all: the Jew is the "born representative of a 'liberal' vision of the world"; he has no sense of "community" (*Gemeinwesen*), something that comes with "mutually dependent personal relationships." Instead, he aims for a " 'constitutional state,' where relationships are conducted in a legally and well-defined manner," and "flesh and bone individuals with their unique differences" are superseded by "abstract citizens, with their rights and duties."[3] Along with mere calculative thought, the Jews represent the incarnation of the *Gesellschaft*, an extrinsic and mechanical model of society. It couldn't be otherwise: What sense of *Gemeinschaft* could they have as a people who, according to their history, went directly from the desert to large cities without ever involving themselves with agriculture, even in the absence of legal obstacles. "The large city is the immediate extension of the desert; both are equally distant from fertile soil, and both limit their inhabitants to a nomadic life."[4]

Just before and during the course of the war, the stereotypes of the *Kriegsideologie* tend to mesh with a mounting anti-Semitic and anti-Judaic sentiment, and becoming violent, especially after the riots in Russia. One can understand why the many different forms of anti-Semitism, or even conspiracy theories, are more deeply rooted in Germany than in other nations. For one, Germany had been defeated in a conflict that saw her isolated by the coalition of her many enemies: "Historical research will make clear—writes Thomas Mann in 1918—the role played by the international Illuminati [*internationales Illuminatentum*], and the worldwide lodge of Masons—with the exception of their naive German members—, in touching off the war, the war of *Zivilisation* against Germany."[5] The disorder in Russia has tremendous repercussions in Germany, not only because of her vicinity, but also due to the fact that just a year after the Bolshevik Revolution, the Hohenzollern Dynasty is toppled in a revolution in which Judaic intellectuals play, or seem to play, a significant role.

These are the years in which Thomas Mann, who has by this point parted with the *Kriegsideologie*, passionately encourages his fellow coun-

trymen not to consider the republic born of the revolution as "the work of young Jewish hoodlums."[6] During these years, "the people are exasperated with revolutionaries and with their foreign, Judaic leaders [*fremdländisch*]," leaders who are "foreign to the race and to the country" (*Stamm- und Landfremde*) to use Marianne Weber's words.[7] These very same years witness Max Weber, according to his wife's testimony, deploring the fact that there are "so many Jews among the revolutionary leaders." Weber's understanding of the historical genesis of such a phenomenon, however, immunizes him from racism, and in fact he does not hide his distaste for anti-Semitism.[8] Nonetheless, the reason why Jews have a unique inclination to incite revolution remains to be explained. Weber's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* attempts to elucidate the problem, emphasizing the role of *ressentiment*, or the "conscious or unconscious thirst for revenge" in the "Judaic religiousness of ethical redemption." Weber vigorously insists upon this point:

> The religiousness of the *Psalms* is dominated by the need for revenge. . . . The majority of the *Psalms* . . . are characterized by moralistic rejoicing, and by the legitimization of explicit or barely concealed sentiments of revenge on the part of a pariah-people. . . . In no other religion in the world is there a universal god with a greater thirst for revenge than Jahve.[9]

Weber's analysis makes clear reference to Nietzsche, and in fact, his denunciation of *ressentiment* is immediately cited by a large political press as an explanation for the active presence of Jews in the uprisings occuring throughout Europe. A new element surfaces: inasmuch as he is the incarnation of *ressentiment*, the Jew is no longer the "born representative" of liberalism, but rather of Bolshevism. Sombart has no doubt about the significant role played by Jews in the Bolshevik Revolution.[10] Indeed, the Jews are a people dominated by *ressentiment*; they tend to continually "upset the existing social order" and this has had "an extraordinary impact upon the construction of a socialist-conceived world."[11] On the other hand, modern revolutionary movements are nothing more than the "*secularization*" of "religious chiliasm, at least in its Judeo-Christian form."[12]

Even in this case, Nietzsche's influence is clearly evident, and this despite the fact that Nietzsche is extraneous to anti-Semitism in any strict sense of the word, and anti-Semitism is itself considered infected by plebeian *ressentiment*: "Anti-Semites cannot forgive the Jews for the fact that they have 'spirit' and money. Anti-Semites: another word for 'fail-

ures.' "[13] However, his condemnation of modernity and the role Jews play in it certainly contributes to a further development of the classic themes surrounding the anti-Judaic debate. Nietzsche considers the Jews the example "*par excellence* of *ressentiment*," the ones with whom "the *slaves' revolt in morals* begins."[14] Not by chance, he makes reference to Judaism even when he comes across, or believes he has come across, plebeian resentment in philosophers such as Socrates and Plato.[15]

In reference to the political and cultural history of the recently fallen Third Reich, Thomas Mann will note: "Although he is far from any racial anti-Semitism, Nietzsche does see in Judaism the birth of Christianity, and in this he rightfully, but horrifyingly, recognizes the seeds of democracy, the French Revolution and the loathsome 'modern ideas' which he vehemently condemns as the morality of the herd."[16] Anti-Judaic motifs are clearly deduced from Nietzsche, and nourished during these years (the term anti-Semitic will be reserved for reference to biological racism). Just as we noted it in Sombart, we can also note it in Spengler. As early as the beginning of the First World War, Spengler alludes to the role played by "Jewish nihilists" in inciting pacifism in the years preceding the conflict. It is a role well worth remembering, despite the eventual, generalized patriotic zeal that ensues.[17] Immediately after Germany's defeat, the "Judaic press" is considered partially responsible for the events that are tearing the nation apart,[18] and Jews are held culpable for the revolutionary movement in the modern world, from the Paris Commune[19] to the Bolshevik fury demonstrated during the overthrow of the Czar.[20] Even more interesting is Spengler's explanation for the revolution in Russa: "*The apocalypse's primal hatred of ancient culture*, and something of the turbid exasperation which develops from the time of the Maccabees and, much later, results in the insurrection which led to the destruction of Jerusalem, are certainly the foundations of Bolshevism."[21] Nietzsche's influence is clearly present in the interpretation of socialism and communism as expressions of *ressentiment*, or "social *revanche*," and as Messianism which, rather than focusing upon the "last judgement, aims at the overthrow or "collapse of bourgeois society."[22]

It would be inappropriate, however, to speak of anti-Semitism in a strict sense, that is, with regard to biology and race, because Spengler considers "folly" the "slogan" that propagates the contrast between "Aryans and Semites";[23] he even prepares an outspoken argument against it. This is even more significant, and unequivocal, given that it coincides with the Nazis' rise to power:

> When one speaks here of race—he observes in *Jahre der Entscheidung*—it is not intended as according to the modern trend followed by European and American anti-Semites, that is, in a Darwinistic and materialistic sense. Racial purity is a grotesque concept, given that for millennia every family line and every lineage have intermingled, and warrior lines, healthy, rich and promising, have always gladly incorporated a foreigner, provided that he was "noble," regardless of what race he *pertained to*.[24]

Despite everything, Spengler's sense of history is too deeply rooted for him to fall prey to vulgar biologisms. The Bolshevik Revolution is not to be reduced to the degeneration or machination of a single Eastern or Semitic race: Bolshevism, "in reality, arises in Europe as a necessary consequence of the final phase of the liberal democracy of 1770, and as the absolute triumph of political rationalism."[25]

And yet, although Spengler distances himself from anti-Semitism and vigorously polemicizes it, his insistence on the continuity of modernity, even if only cultural and not biological or racial, from its origins in Judaism and Christianity through to Bolshevism, draws him objectively closer to Nazism.[26] In addition to the motifs deduced by Nietzsche, Nazism develops and radicalizes a theme that is completely extrinsic to the philosopher, though it may be traced back to the *Kriegsideologie*. As early as 1911, Sombart observes that the Jews have no sense of the irreducible historical uniqueness of a distinct people; rather, they level and dissolve everything into "a single large humanity . . . which in turn is nothing more than the sum of unities without quality."[27] Jews are characterized—Sombart states after the war—by a "rootless spiritual constitution"; they lack sensitivity for all that is "historically handed down," "the sense of what has matured, of what has become, of what is 'organic' for a historical society and its bearers, for a concretely unique population with their own unique history."[28] We might say, employing a language dear to other authors of this period, that the Jew lacks a sense of "historicity." In fact, this is the opinion of Spengler, according to whom the Jew has lost touch with the "countryside": "the smallest of the ghettos is still part, poor as it might be, of a metropolis." The Jew might well abandon, at least in appearance, his nomadism and "consider himself a member of the host population, and a participant in their destiny. However, as was the case in many countries in 1914, he doesn't embrace it as *his own* destiny; rather, he limits himself to a stance in favor of this population, and judges from the position of an interested spectator. He remains forever removed from a real sense of what is being fought for."[29]

Destiny, *Geschick*: this is another keyword of the *Kriegsideologie*; and the Jew is considered lacking "historicity" and "destiny" in the same way that Germany's enemies are. One might say that he is the typical representative of *Zivilisation*; it is not by chance that he is so enthusiastic for the word "international": this is why the Jew ends up functioning as the "destructor" of the culture in which he resides, in the same way that "Western culture" is the "destructor" of "her colonial territories."[30] At this point, the Jew comes to embody the subversive. First there is the war, and the necessary mobilization of, and vigilance over, every soldier and civilian; then the Bolshevik Revolution and the anguish provoked by the resultant devastation. All of this triggers a more or less virulent anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic sentiment that believes itself able to identify the Jew (stateless, rootless, with no ties to the countryside and at home in the anonymity of cities) as the vehicle of, or in the case of biological racism, the actual virus which is devastating the West. Earlier, we made a distinction between anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic, but we would be remiss not to add that the line between the two is not well-defined and is rather inconsistent, as Sombart's case demonstrates. Sombart is concerned with grounding his stereotypes in a historical framework, but he considers "unsolved" the issue of whether "it is Judaic nature that 'causes' the ghetto, or the ghetto that creates Judaic nature."[31] The psychology of peoples has almost completely lost any semblance of historical foundation, and instead, bears a heavy, naturalistic burden with racist tendencies.

## 3. The Jews and the Community without Soil

What reinforces the anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic currents that are already well rooted in Germany, but that become virulent with the *Kriegsideologie*, is the development that occurs in some significant sectors of Judaic culture. It is worth pausing to consider this unique and surprising fact. In the years immediately after the First World War, it is the very same members of the population who will later be sacrificed by the Nazi *Gemeinschaft* who make reference to the "community," to include the "community of blood." In 1920, for example, Martin Buber states that the "community of blood" (*Gemeinschaft des Blutes*) is the indispensible foundation of Judaic spiritual identity.[32] Likewise, Franz Rosenzweig exalts the Jewish people, a people without a homeland, exiled and per-

secuted, as the only population that can truly call themselves a "community of blood." Instead,

> the peoples of the world are not content with the community of blood; they thrust their roots into the black of the soil, soil which is dead, but which gives life and sustains it. Their will to eternity is anchored . . . to the soil and its dominion, to territory. We were the only ones who trusted blood and left the land.[33]

Here, the "community of blood" is the confutation of the ideology of blood and soil, of *Blut und Boden*. Being free of the ties constituted by the soil means being extraneous to the logic of "dominion," which the soil and the struggle over soil inevitably imply. This is also why, according to Rosenzweig, "the Jew is truly the only one who, in the Christian world, is unable to take the war seriously; and therefore he is the only true 'pacifist.' "[34] Similarly, for Buber the Judaic community of blood has the distinction of not being tied to the "earth," of not being "rooted in soil" (*bodenständig*); in other words, it lacks any naturalistic element.[35] It is for precisely this reason that the Jews embody, more deeply and intensely than any other people, the aspiration to unify and unite humanity.[36]

The traumatic experience of the First World War reveals contradictory outcomes. On the one hand, again we come across the painful search for roots, the guarantee of spiritual identity in a time of insurrection and suffering. This leads to the theorization of tradition as a "chain" in which every individual is "a necessary member," and the idea of blood as the "deepest, most powerful layer of the soul" (*die tiefste Machtschicht der Seele*).[37] The exaltation of a "community of men who were, are and will be, a community of the dead, the living and the unborn"[38] is reminescent of Edmund Burke. In effect, the great prophet of traditionalism and the struggle against the "abstract" and licentious ideas of the French Revolution is very influential in Germany in this period (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, §1; and *infra*, chap. 7, § 6). Within the intimate and intense atmosphere of such a *Gemeinschaft*, there is no room for the desecrating and banausic "art of making contracts" (*Vertragskunst*), which Buber too holds to be in opposition to "the power of sacrifice." These are themes with which we are well familiar, as are their contrasts: "heroic life," "unconditioned life" as opposed to banal "petty 'progress' "; and the "power of the soul" as opposed to what is even more banal, "busywork" (*Betriebsamkeit*). Not by chance, the author most highly regarded in this

context is, once again, Friedrich Nietzsche.[39] Buber even goes as far as to condemn, referring explicitly to the Jews, "intellectuality [*Intellektualität*] that is extraneous to life, unbalanced and, so to speak, incoherent."[40] That is, the Jews are condemned as uprooted intellectuals who are deaf or alien to the values of the *Gemeinschaft*.

This, however, is only one aspect. It is worth noting that the community theorized and exalted here not only lacks any warlike signification, but it is considered diametrically opposed to the profane world that provoked the atrocious massacre. Subsequently, the same pacifistic tendencies manifested by more than just a few Jewish intellectuals during the war are further accentuated.[41] It is worth examining Franz Rosenzweig in this regard. During the war years, that period of ubiquitous patriotic enthusiasm, he too falls under the influence of the *Kriegsideologie*. He refuses, in fact, to consider war "more immoral [or more 'irreligious'] than peace," and hails the warrior's "capacity to suffer [heroism]," and his profound humanity: "Animals do not wage war, in the same way that they do not pray, do not laugh, and are incapable of poetry."[42] Eventually, the *Kriegsideologie* is overthrown by means of its very own language.

It is worth noting that this overthrow will end up reinforcing the conviction, evermore widespread in nationalistic or anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic circles, that the Jews are extraneous to the authentic German *Gemeinschaft*. The exaltation of a community without soil can never avoid suspicion. To return to Rosenzweig:

> All about the motherland runs the blood of her sons; in fact, they do not trust a living community of blood that is not firmly grounded to the earth. Only we trusted the blood and left the land. In this way we saved the precious juice of life which guaranteed our eternal being and, unlike the other peoples on Earth, we separated our vital element from any link to that which is dead. Indeed, the soil nurtures, but at the same time ties. . . . And the motherland, the place where a people take up residence and leave their mark on the land, almost to the point of forgetting that to be a people means more than simply being seated in a country, never becomes for the eternal people that which it is for others. They are not permitted to stay at home and become corrupt; rather they maintain the independence of travelers.[43]

In turn, Buber observes that the Jew lacks all "the elements that constitute a nation and render it a reality: a country, a language, vital forms."[44]

For those most passionately nationalistic or emphatically anti-Judaic and anti-Semitic, this is a valuable confession, laden with consequences.

## 4. THE WESTERN WORLD AND JUDAISM: JASPERS AND HEIDEGGER

At this point we may examine the positions of Jaspers and Heidegger with regards to the "Jewish question." As far as Jaspers is concerned, it almost seems superfluous to address the problem: According to Lukács, Jaspers refuses to support the regime simply for "reasons of a private nature" (in reference to the philosopher's Jewish wife).[45] And yet, it is interesting to note how these "reasons of a private nature" seem to work their way into his philosophy. Jaspers explicitly criticizes the "theory of race."[46] He insists that the origins of the Western World do not reside solely with the "Greek philosophers," but with the "Jewish prophets" as well;[47] and that philosophy, authentic philosophy, must not only know how to inherit "the disposition of the heroic nordic soul," but, together with the "clarity of Greek thought," it must inherit the "profoundness of the Judaic soul."[48] Quite clearly Jaspers condemns anti-Semitism, which is nonetheless infecting currents and realms even extraneous to Nazism.

Still, despite his insistence on the existence of Judaic roots in Western culture, oddly enough, in 1938, Jaspers seems to resonate some anti-Judaic motifs. He cites various works in which Nietzsche declares that it is the Jews who are the perpetrators of the slaves' revolt, those who embody "the instinct of *ressentiment* turned genius." It is hardly just reported speech. Each of these citations, to include the one above is followed by passionate commentary, which seems to reveal Jaspers's identification with Nietzsche as he describes in detail the role that the Jews have played in overturning traditional aristocratic values. The negation and defamation of the world, typical of Christianity, finds "its immediate origins in *Judaism*. In the concentration and intensity of its final motifs, Christianity is a thoroughly Judaic phenomenon."[49] Is this simply a detached comment? In reality, Jaspers seems to give Nietzsche credit for the "psychological discovery" of the devastating consequences of *ressentiment*, for disentangling the "complex web of the effects of *ressentiment* . . . capable of misrepresenting all value judgments."[50]

It is not paradoxical and contradictory to try to find anti-Judaic motifs in the work of a philosopher who, if only because of his family,

inclined to see his own destiny as that of the Jews? Moreover, these are the years in which he comes to know firsthand the immediate and painful consequences of the regime's anti-Semitism. He is removed as the chair of the university, and his wife—Marianne Weber says—chooses to completely withdraw from life, "so as not to endanger others."[51] And yet, in order to avoid the risk of schematism and over-simplification, let us examine a different example, that of Bergson, an authentic Jew who, in his spiritual heritage, regrets the grave role played by his people in the Bolshevik Revolution.[52] The growing hostility, discrimination and oppression to which the Jews are subject does not immunize them from the anti-Judaic stereotypes that are born, more or less, from the uprisings in Russia and in central Europe. On the other hand, these very events have the power to motivate some moderate or conservative Judaic circles and authors to distance themselves from the small minority of Jews active in the insurrections and revolutionary struggle that would tear apart the regimes that were oppressing them. This position, and the distinctions it entails regarding the Jewish community's role, is at times perceived or considered the most appropriate policy with which to contrast the mounting anti-Semitism, or at least its most hateful expressions.

With regards to Jaspers, it should be noted that, before being published, the text of *Nietzsche und das Christentum* is read in Marianne Weber's parlor. She is anything but inclined to anti-Semitism—among other reasons, she has a daughter-in-law who is "not Aryan"[53]—and yet, we have already mentioned some moods and expressions of an anti-Judaic nature on her part. Naturally, in the text that was examined above, Jaspers continues to be adamantly opposed to anti-Semitism. And his assertion, that the Jews had become the protagonists of the slaves' revolt only after having denied "their heroic and warlike past,"[54] cannot be welcomed by the Nazis. The fact remains that the persistent denunciation of modernity necessarily brings about an examination of Nietzsche, who, tracing the slaves' revolt to its most remote origins, accounts for the presence of *ressentiment* in Christianity and Judaism. Jaspers is concerned with distinguishing between Jesus on the one hand and historical Christianity on the other, and between original Judaism and "the falsification of Israel's history as carried out by the Judaic priests."[55] It is through this distinction, which he goes to great lengths to ascribe to Nietzsche as well, that Jaspers in turn attempts to distinguish himself from Nazism, which has little inclination to preserve anything of Christianity, or worse, of Judaism. His interpretation continues to be in line with Nietzsche's regarding the

assertion that the "original Judaic and Christian insurrections of late antiquity" continue to exert an influence within the "spirit of modern democracy," in the "ideals of equality," "liberalism, socialism, and democracy."[56] In this sense, Jaspers's persistent criticism of modernity, while compatible with his rejection of anti-Semitism, makes any clear demarcation with respect to anti-Semitism difficult.

We may now move forward with an analysis of Heidegger's position. Debate regarding the philosopher's anti-Semitism is the most bitter of all the aspects of his contentious relationship to Nazism. Rather than engage in a battle fought through a series of citations from various contradictory sources and testimonies, the present analysis will proceed with a preliminary clarification of the categories that are or should be incorporated in the debate. Without a doubt, biological racism would seem to be completely extrinsic to Heidegger. At the outbreak of the Second World War, Heidegger, clearly referring to the prevailing racism, condemns the fact that "blood and race become instruments of history,"[57] and this condemnation is radicalized, as we shall see, in the years that follow (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, § 5).

On the other hand, Heidegger, too, is of the opinion that "Bolshevism is in effect Judaic":[58] a theory that is—as has been noted—similar to Hitler's, and to those of his inspirers and ideologists.[59] This is an incontrovertible observation, and yet it requires two clarifications: first, this theory is certainly not limited to Nazi circles, and second, Heidegger's theory is quite different from the official ideology of the regime, even somewhat confrontational at times. The line of continuity traced by Hitler or Rosenberg, is of a racial nature; that is, Bolshevism is considered a disease that has infected the healthy body of the West by means of an external pathogen, the Jew.[60] In opposition to this thesis, Heidegger observes that Bolshevism, as the "final form of Marxism, essentially has nothing to do with Judaism or the Russian people" (deeply spiritual), rather it "is originally Western, a European possibility." Actually, it is the culmination of Western history:

> the rise of the masses, of industry, of technology, the extinction of Christianity; of course, given that the dominion of reason, as far as it levels all, is merely the consequence of Christianity, and that this after all is born out of Judaic origins (cf. the philosophy of Nietzsche regarding the slaves' revolt in morals), Bolshevism is in effect Judaic. But then, Christianity must also be Bolshevik! What decisions become necessary as a result of this?[61]

Therefore, the problem cannot be resolved by isolating or extirpating the supposed external pathogen. In this sense, Heidegger's rejection of anti-Semitism is clear: In order to definitively settle the score with democracy and Bolshevism, a ruthless rereading of Western history and modernity is required; a rereading that must start from Christianity, though its Judaic origin is immediately highlighted. It is in this way that the rejection of anti-Semitism is firmly tied to anti-Judaism, as is further confirmed by the explicit reference to Nietzsche and to his denunciation of the role played by the Jews in the slaves' revolt. Both Heidegger and Jaspers, by means of their radical rejection of modernity beginning with Christianity, encounter anti-Judaism. Heidegger, even more than Jaspers, bitterly condemns liberalism, democracy, and socialism; and at the same time he accuses, following Nietzsche's lead, Christianity (and Judaism) of engendering these superficial, secularized movements.

We already noted Sombart's and Spengler's condemnation of the nomadism of the Jew, who is perceived as being incapable of truly rooting himself in a concrete historical and organic reality. It is within this same cultural context that, according to Jaspers, Heidegger denounces, shortly after the Nazi rise to power, "the dangerous international association of the Jews."[62] After the start of the war, anything that gives the impression of internationalism or cosmopolitanism appears suspicious. In regard to this, Thomas Mann, in 1918, points a finger at the anti-German plot or conspiracy of the international Freemasonry; and Husserl, after the war, in a conversation we referred to earlier (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 1), attacks "international catholicism." The Catholic interlocutor in turn responds curtly to the Jewish philosopher, alluding to the dark role played during the war by the Jews.[63] Heidegger is suspicious of both Judaic and Catholic internationalism, not to mention, of course, communism. Some months before the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Heidegger describes the political panorama of his country as such: Germans, the inheritors of ancient Hellenism, face the plots devised by Rome (the Catholic party of the center) and Moscow (the communist party).[64]

One can well understand, then, the pathos of the unique and irreducible historicity of each country. It is this theme that Heidegger cites in 1936 as the rationale for his encounter with Nazism, even though, it should be added, this category at once immunizes him from biological racism which, in his eyes, appears responsible for the "*idolizing and raising to the level of unconditional* the *conditions* of historical being, for example, of the *völkisch* element, with all of its ambiguity." This racism

is, therefore, in the final analysis, responsible for the naturalistic distortion and impoverishment of historicity.[65] It is for this reason that we prefer, in Heidegger's case as well, to speak of anti-Judaism, though it may assume many forms: from Jaspers's topos of Judaic subversion, to the support that Heidegger gives to hideous measures of discrimination. In a 1929 letter, Heidegger, though distancing himself from any "campaign of hatred" (*Hetze*), emphasizes the necessity to oppose the "growing Judaization [*Verjudung*]" of "*German* spiritual life," which must instead be strengthened once again and be rooted in authentic German forces.[66] Four years later, in April, Heidegger's wife, on behalf of the acting rector of the University of Freiburg, approves of the "new, harsh and rational German law," though not without some personal difficulty. Under the new law, Husserl's son, Gerhart, though disabled in the First World War, loses his position as professor of civil law, because he is a Jew.[67]

It is the pathos of unique *German* historicity—the adjective is highlighted in a letter dated 1929—that leads Heidegger to support the Third Reich's initial measures enacted to de-emancipate an ethnic group considered fundamentally extraneous to Germany. And so, the process initiated by the loathsome French Revolution which had, in 1791, emancipated the Jews, is now reversed.

## 5. SCHMITT AND THE THEORY OF JUDAIC CONSPIRACY

All of the traditional anti-Judaic themes are to be found in Carl Schmitt. The Jew is "a parasite and an authentic merchant";[68] he lacks "any natural relationship with real soil."[69] To the extent that he is without roots, he is inclined to abstract intellectualism, or rather, to a "Judaic dialectic"—here the political theorist directly cites *Mein Kampf*.[70] Schmitt's anti-Judaism seems loaded with naturalistic elements: There is an insurmountable breach between the Jew's "juridicial thought," and the "German man's sentiment of the law." There is no communicability between the Jews and "our lineage [*Art*]. Those who recognize this truth, know what race means."[71]

The above remarks come after 1935, after the Nürnberg laws. De-emancipation of the Jews does not seem to be enough; the Jews are still considered a threat inasmuch as they have a "tactical, mercantile, and parasitical relationship to German spiritual values." Moreover, they are—

again Hitler is cited—the self-proclaimed enemies of uniqueness and of the autonomous "*völkisch* productivity" of all peoples.[72] Schmitt calls for unrestrained opposition, at least on the cultural front: "Frankly, it would be irresponsible to cite a Jewish author as a point of reference or as a sort of authority in a particular field." The "issue of citations" is a precise matter, and must be dealt with rigorously and correctly: "A Jewish author, even when cited, is for us a Jew. . . . If it is necessary for scientific reasons to cite a Jewish author, the qualification, 'Jew,' should always be added. The very word itself, 'Jew,' will give rise to a healthy exorcism."[73]

Clearly, Schmitt goes well beyond Heidegger. The latter seems to have no desire to follow Schmitt's directions for juridical publications. Even though the dedication to Husserl vanishes from the 1941 edition of *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger's mentor continues to be cited with warmth, and without the infamous Star of David that Schmitt proposes to fix and append upon every Jewish author he encounters. Schmitt makes reference to the "Jew, Laski,"[74] the "Jew, Moses Mendelssohn," and the "Jewish philosopher Friedrich Julius Stahl-Jolson."[75]

When possible, the original Judaic surname of the author must be included; this in order to avoid infecting (*infizieren*) German culture, to block the silent infection spread by a people who habitually camouflage and mask themselves.[76] Schmitt's example *par excellence* is that of Stahl-Jolson, a man who "works . . . according to his lineage; that is, within the duplicity of a masked existence, one which is all the more horrible in as far as it desperately seeks to be something other than what it is." He only appears to be a conservative; in reality, he too acts in the debauched manner of "Rothschild, Karl Marx, Börne, Heine, Meyer Beer and many others. . . . Stahl-Jolson is the most audacious of the Judaic front, because he infiltrates both the Prussian state and the Evangelical church."[77]

By now, the conspiracy theory distinctly emerges. Is Stahl-Jolson's duplicity a conscious effort, or may we assume in him something akin to good faith? Schmitt responds to the question as such: "It has always been pointed out that this man was probably 'subjectively sincere.' It could be; but I must add that I have no way of peering into this Jew's soul; and generally speaking, we have no access to the most intimate essence of the Jews."[78] In 1936, in Germany, this remark must have perplexed some isolated intellectuals. What is certain is that, less than two years later, Schmitt feels the need to respond to those mudslingers who had "covered him with dirt" because of his statement; and in order to eliminate any doubts, in his book on Thomas Hobbes he includes a note, revealing that after

Stahl's death his nephew "burned all of his uncle's letters," on the pretext that they were "illegible."[79] At this point, Schmitt seems to have well demonstrated the duplicitous and conspiratorial nature of Stahl-Jolson.

The entire history of modern culture appears to be traversed, if not by a bona fide conspiracy, then by the mysterious and disturbing presence of Judaic authors and circles. How else can one explain the liberal corruption that Spinoza, a "Jewish philosopher," perpetrates upon Hobbes's theory? "A slight shifting of concepts, an inversion derivative of Judaic existence and, with the greatest of ease, in just a few years the decisive turning point in the Leviathan's destiny is accomplished." On the other hand, it is indeed a "Jewish scholar," Leo Strauss, who underscores the fact that according to Hobbes, "the Jews are the true promoters of the seditious and subversive distinction between religion and politics."[80]

The principal victim of this conspiracy or sinister activity is, naturally, Germany. With regard to this, Schmitt cites the words of a noted Jewish deputy, Eduard Simson, uttered in 1866, during the course of the constitutional conflict in Prussia. Turning to Otto von Bismarck, still new as the iron chancellor, the liberal opposition leader declares: "You are battling the spiritual and ethical powers [*Mächte*] that be; sooner or later, you will have to yield to these powers, the importance and significance of which you so underestimate." To this, Schmitt comments: "The liberal Germans who applauded with naive enthusiasm these obscure words, were deaf and blind. And so the struggle of those 'spiritual and ethical powers' developed in an invisible and elusive manner, until Germany's defeat in 1918 seemed achieved."[81] Seen in this light, the fall of the Second Reich is perceived as the result of a Judaic conspiracy that, incidentally, takes on international dimensions, and reveals itself even as one of the causes of the First World War. With regard to the "Judaic interpretation of Leviathan and Behemoth," Schmitt asserts that these describe

> the history of the world . . . as the battle of pagan peoples against one another. In particular, the battle centers upon the maritime powers of Leviathan and the terrestrial powers of Behemoth: Behemoth tries to slash Leviathan with its horns, while Leviathan with its fins clogs the mouth and nostrils of Behemoth, killing it. It is, incidentally, a beautiful representation of the strangulation of a land power by means of a naval blockade.[82]

The clash between England (Leviathan) and Germany (Behemoth), and the latter's defeat due in part to a naval blockade, will be ceaselessly

denounced by Schmitt as a violation of international law, and an expression of total war (cf. *infra*, chap. 6, §§ 6ff); this tragedy seems to find its prefiguration in remote texts that apparently lack reference to political life, yet when closely examined, they reveal a truly sinister and surprisingly contemporary significance.

After the allusive description of the conflict between England and Germany, Schmitt further expounds upon the "Judaic interpretations of Leviathan and Behemoth," though all the while alluding to the present: "But the Jews stand apart, looking on as the populations of the Earth kill one another: For them, these reciprocal 'massacres and butcheries' are legal and 'kosher.' They feed upon the meat of murdered peoples, drawing life from them."[83] Similarly, the denunciation of the supposed "battle" that the "spiritual and ethical powers,"—that is, Judaism—unleashed in opposition to the Second Reich from the nineteenth century up until its annihilation in 1918, concludes as such: "Today, following the renewal of German collective power carried out by Hitler, this same battle becomes a free-for-all inasmuch as it has taken on worldwide political dimensions."[84] The text being cited here is dated 1939: The Second World War has yet to break out, but it is clearly just over the horizon. The Third Reich hastily prepares for it, but this doesn't stop it from pinning blame upon the Jews and their inexhaustible conspiratorial activities. On January 30 of that same year, Hitler declares: "If international Judaism were able, in Europe or elsewhere, to throw the world's peoples headlong into war, the result would not be the Bolshevization of Europe and the victory of Judaism, but rather the extermination of the Jewish race in Europe."[85]

After 1945, Ernst Jünger maintains that regarding his involvement with the Third Reich, "I didn't really distance myself until the 'Crystal Night,'[86] until, that is, the pogrom of the night between November 9 and 10, 1938, which demonstrated the extent to which even the deemancipation of the Jews devised at Nürnberg was now considered insufficient." Jünger's relationship with Schmitt is well known, but the latter, at least with regard to anti-Semitism, continues to support the regime well after this date.

## NOTES

1. For the above citations, cf. Léon Poliakov, *Histoire de l'antisémitisme: L'Europe suicidaire, 1870–1933* (Paris, 1977), chaps. 3 and 4; Alex P. Schmid,

*Churchills privater Krieg: Intervention und Konterrevolution im russischen Bürgerkrieg 1918–1920* (Zürich, 1974), pp. 293, 312; Domenico Losurdo, "Marx e la storia del totalitarismo," *Storig e problemi contemporanei* 6 (1990): 41–61.

2. Werner Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben* (Leipzig, 1911), pp. 331ff.

3. Ibid., p. 318.

4. Ibid., pp. 414ff.

5. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, ed. Hanno Helbling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 24.

6. Thomas Mann, *Von deutscher Republik: Politische Schriften und Reden in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1984), vol. 17, p. 72.

7. Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, 1926), p. 672.

8. Ibid., p. 660.

9. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1985), pp. 301ff, *passim*.

10. Werner Sombart, *Der proletarische Socialismus*, vol. 2 (Jena, 1924), p. 517.

11. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 153; vol. 1, p. 57.

12. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 318.

13. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Der Wille zur Macht," af. 864 (1888), in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. 13 (München-Berlin–New York), p. 365.

14. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jerseits von Gut und Böse: Zur Genealogie der Moral* (München, 1999), vol. 1, pp. 7, 16.

15. Nietzsche, "Der Wille zur Macht," af. 429 (1888), p. 331.

16. Thomas Mann, "Nietzsche's Philosophie im Lichte unserer Erfahrung" (1947), in *Essays*, vol. 3, ed. Hermann Kurzke (Frankfurt a.M., 1986), p. 252.

17. Letter to H. Klores dated October 25, 1914, in Oswald Spengler, *Briefe 1913–1936*, ed. Anton Koktanek and Manfred Schröter (München, 1963), pp. 29ff.

18. Letter to H. Klores dated December 18, 1918, in Spengler, *Briefe 1913–1936*, p. 112.

19. Oswald Splengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (München, 1933), p. 83.

20. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (München, 1980). pp. 995ff n.

21. Oswald Spengler, *Preußentum und Sozialismus* (München, 1921), p. 94.

22. Ibid., pp. 83, 73. The theme of the relationship between universal justice and socialist revolution is well developed by Nietzsche in *The Antichrist*.

23. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, p. 952.

24. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 157.

25. Ibid., pp. 82ff. It remains to be seen, incidentally, whether the recog-

nition of the genesis of the Bolshevik revolution in the West is fully compatible with the condemnation of the USSR, the instigator of the colonies' revolts, as a "Mongolian" and no longer a "white" power (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 7).

26. The theme of Judeo-Christian-Bolshevik continuity is present in Hitler's table conversations; cf. F. Genoud, *Hitler: Libres propos sur la guerre et la paix* (Paris, 1952), vol. 1, pp. 87–88, 140f, 303f, and vol. 2, p. 346 (Bormann-Vermerke). These table conversations were transcribed and collected by Martin Bormann, who was the head of the party chancellery. As for the theme of liberalism, democracy and socialism as secularized versions of Judaism and Christianity, cf. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1937), pp. 109, 127.

27. Sombart, *Die Juden und das Wirtschaftsleben*, p. 319.

28. Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 2, pp. 153–54.

29. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, pp. 951–54.

30. Ibid., p. 955.

31. Sombart, *Der proletarische Sozialismus*, vol. 2, p. 154.

32. M. Buber, *Drei Reden über das Judentum* (Frankfurt, 1920), p. 19.

33. Franz Rosenzweig, "Der Stern der Erlösung" (1921), in *Franz Rosenzweig: Der Mensch und sein Werk*, 4th ed. (Den Haag, 1976), vol. 2, p. 332 n. 34.

34. Ibid., p. 368.

35. Buber, *Drei Reden*, pp. 20ff, 35, 50.

36. Ibid., pp. 44, 54ff.

37. Ibid., pp. 20, 22.

38. Ibid., p. 20.

39. Ibid., pp. 60ff.

40. Ibid., p. 24.

41. With regard to this, a symptomatic value may be recognized in the fruitless debate that ensues immediately after the outbreak of the war, between Scheler on the one hand, and three Jewish intellectuals, Buber, Landauer, and Brod on the other. The result of that is a split with their former teacher, who, at the time, is the most important philosopher of the *Kriegsideologie*. Cf. Max Brod, *Streitbares Leben* (München, 1960). Within the German Judaic community, there is a different, nationalistic current that affirms the convergence of Judaism and Germanism. It is represented by Hermann Cohen. Cf. Arno Munster, "Les intellectuels (philosophes) juifs-allemands face à la guerre de 1914," in *Les Philosophes et la guerre de 14*, ed. Philippe Soulez (Vincennes, 1988), pp. 209–21.

42. Letters to parents dated August 17, 1916, and January 6, 1917, in Franz Rosenzweig, *Briefe*, ed. Edith Rosenzweig (Berlin, 1935), pp. 100, 144ff.

43. Rosenzweig, *Der Stern der Erlösung*.

44. Buber, *Drei Reden*, pp. 21ff.

45. György Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin, 1954), p. 416.

46. Karl Jaspers, *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* (Berlin, 1947), p. 142.

47. Ibid., p. 174.

48. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie* (Berlin-Heidelberg, 1948), p. vi.

49. Karl Jaspers, "Nietzsche und das Christentum" (1938), in *Aneignung und Polemik:Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie,* ed. Hans Saner (München, 1968), pp. 349ff.

50. Ibid., pp. 348, 356.

51. Letter dated December 28, 1938, in *Wege einer Freundschaft. Briefwechsel Peter Wust–Marianne Weber,* p. 230.

52. With regard to this, cf. Philippe Soulez, *Bergson politique* (Paris, 1990), pp. 196–200.

53. Cf. also the letter dated December 28, 1938, in *Wege einer Freundschaft. Briefwechsel Peter Wust–Marianne Weber,* pp. 230ff.

54. Jaspers, "Nietzsche und das Christentum," p. 349.

55. Ibid., pp. 349ff.

56. Ibid., p. 353.

57. Martin Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)," in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt, 1980), vol. 65, p. 54.

58. Ibid., p. 54.

59. Cf. Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie,* eds. Annemarie Gehtmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 44.

60. Hitler is obsessively insistent on the idea of "microbes" or the Judaic "virus," particularly in *Bormann-Vermerke* (audio recording), vol. 1, pp. 88, 321 (conversations dated October 25, 1941, and February 22, 1942).

61. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 54.

62. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (München-Zürich, 1984), p. 101.

63. Cf. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu Seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt–New York, 1988), pp. 113ff.

64. Letter dated June 22, 1932, in Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochman, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969,* ed. Joachim W. Storck (Marbach, 1990), p. 52.

65. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," pp. 117, 493.

66. The letter, dated October 2, 1929, was published in *Die Zeit* on the December 22, 1989; cf. Ulrich Sieg, "Die Verjudung des deutschen Geistes: Ein unbekannter Brief Heideggers," *Die Zeit* 22 (1989).

67. The letter, dated April 29, 1933, and addressed to Edmund Husserl's wife, is now in the possession of historian Hugo Ott, who analyzed and discussed it at great length at the international Heideggerian conference (Torino, November 6–8, 1990), *Martin Heidegger und die Politik* (typescript), pp. 10.

68. Carl Schmitt, "Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft im Kampf gegen den jüdischen Geist," in *Deutsche Juristen-Zeitung* 41 (1936): 1197.

69. Carl Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte* (Berlin, 1939), p. 12.

70. Schmitt, "Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft," p. 1198.

71. Ibid., pp. 1193, 1197.
72. Ibid., pp. 1197, 1199.
73. Ibid., pp. 1197ff.
74. Schmitt, *Der Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht*, p. 310.
75. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes: Sinn und Fehlschlag eines politischen Symbols* (Hamburg, 1938), pp. 94, 106.
76. Carl Schmitt, "Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft," in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf Mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles 1929–1939* (Hamburg, 1940), pp. 1195, 1197.
77. Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes*, pp. 108ff.
78. Carl Schmitt, "Die deutsche Rechtswissenschaft," p. 1197.
79. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, p. 109 n. 1.
80. Ibid., pp. 87ff.
81. Carl Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierungen (1939). Zu Christoph Steding 'Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kulture,' " in *Positionen und Begriffe*, p. 294.
82. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan*, pp. 17ff.
83. Ibid., pp. 16, 18.
84. Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierungen," p. 294.
85. In Léon Poliakov, *Bréviaire de la haine: Le IIIe Reich et les Juifs* (Paris, 1951).
86. In Julien Hervier, *Entretiens avec Ernst Jünger* (Paris, 1986), p. 88.

*F I V E*

# BETWEEN "BLOOD AND SOIL" AND REACTIONARY MODERNISM

## 1. THE IDEOLOGICAL CONTRADICTIONS OF THE THIRD REICH

The First World War, and the clash between Germany and the countries in which liberal-democratic traditions have long been established, radicalize the tendency to criticize and to denounce modernity, a tendency already largely present in German culture. Germany's community of war is a result of the "ideas of 1914," ideas that openly oppose the "ideas of 1789." The latter are regarded as synonymous with the predominance of "politics"[1] and democracy, or rather with a "bourgeois" democracy, imbued with the superstitious belief in idle and self-satisfied "security." The target of this denunciation is not only the French Revolution; criticism of "modernity" (*Modernität*), of the "present times" (*Jetztzeit*), of the "spirit of the time" goes much further; and, in line with Nietzsche, who is referred to by Mann, the "ideas of the eighteenth century," that is, "modern ideas," are also condmned.[2] In the introduction to one of his books, published at the start of the war, Carl Schmitt declares that he intends to challenge the "self-defined modern man," the "spirit of the time" (*Geist der Zeit*), "the era of the machine, of organization, the mechanistic era" characterized by "the most generalized calculability" (*der allgemeisten Berechenbarkeit*).[3]

With regards to democracy, hideous modernity develops especially in the homeland of the French Revolution, whereas its heavy burden of banality and mechanism finds its home in the Anglo-Saxon world. Not

by chance, Scheler accuses the British of confusing two very different categories: those of "thinking" and of "reckoning" (*Rechnen*), and, also, of confusing authentic civilization and culture (*Kultur*) with mere "comfort,"[4] that is, with *Zivilisation*. According to Thomas Mann, the latter is analogous to the "mere culture of utility," the "morals of utility," the "ideology of well-being," the "antimetaphysical, utilitarian Enlightenment," "ratio" (that is, rationality founded exclusively upon calculation), the "bourgeois spirit," the petty attachment to "security" and "happiness," and escape from everything that is connected to the "elementary" or dangerous dimensions of existence.[5] It is against this *Zivilisation* that the Germans ("the most interior people, the people of metaphysics") take up arms[6] in what is none other than "the German war against Western 'civilization.' "[7]

In 1914, Schmitt claims that "the era of the machine" is, at the same time, the era that witnesses the greatest "need for codifications and subsumptions"; this at the expense of individual autonomy,[8] which the modern world wrongly presumes to develop or respect. The condemnation of technical or calculative thought, which plays such an important role in German culture in the twentieth century, is already somehow implicit in the *Kriegsideologie*'s harsh criticism of *Zivilisation*, of "bourgeois security," of the petty bookkeeping that characterizes a world of merchants and incurable philistines, and the entire era of democratic standardization. Despite manifold variations and mediations, these themes continue to exercise an influence well after the end of the First World War.

If on the one hand these topoi effectively stimulate an ideological opposition to the loathsome *Zivilisation* of Germany's enemies, on the other hand they are contradictory to the technical and productive needs of the war machine. Awareness of this contradiction comes, above all, with defeat in 1918. Schmitt, who, at the beginning of the conflict, had denounced "the mechanistic era," later mocks the romantic juxtaposition of "mechanic" and "organic."[9] In Spengler's evaluation of the defeat, romanticism is accused of being "extraneous and hostile to the world, to the point of absurdity": it is this heritage (the "railways and the customs union" have not been talked about enough) that has hindered the full deployment of Germanys' military potential.[10] The charge goes even further, condemning humanistic and idealistic traditions as well, traditions which regard Germany as a land of "thinkers and poets," and consider the production of a novel to be more important than "the construction of an

airplane engine"; what is even worse is that they place "technical and economic issues outside of and *on a lower level* than culture."[11]

It is Ernst Jünger who makes the most structured attempt to reconcile technology and mechanization with the *Kriegsideologie*, and with the *Kulturkritik* so deeply rooted in German culture. In reality, inasmuch as the modern world of technology and industry is synonymous with standardization and plebeian vulgarization, it is still condemned and looked upon suspiciously or scornfully. Not by chance, "the big cities between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries" are denounced as "the ideal strongholds of security": "every victory of technology is thus a victory of comfort" and everything is determined by "economics."[12] By now, however, the situation has radically changed. For one, technology has conquered reality: "The famous distinction between the city and the country only endures in the romantic sphere; it is just as invalid as the distinction between the mechanical and the organic world. There is no point, then, in trying to create for oneself a sort of "natural park" (*Naturschutzpark*) within modernity, a bucolic island which only survives in the imagination of incurable romantics.[13] However enticing "the sound of medieval bells or the scent of exotic flowers" may be, to lull oneself into these suggestions means to abandon oneself to the "diversions of the defeated."[14]

No, the battle must be carried out starting from within the very heart of modernity, and it can be engaged and won because technology has started to reveal a new, diverse meaning, even in contradiction to the traditional one. Far from being synonymous with standardization, technology allows for new opportunities to halt and even reverse the ruinous course that the modern world has taken. The war has demonstrated the clear superiority of elite corps, well armed and well trained, and at the same time inspired by an irrepressible warlike spirit. Once and for all, the era of the revolutionary *levée en masse*, once able to determine the outcome of a conflict, has come to an end: "the masses are no longer able to attack or to defend themselves." "In this sense, the masses vanish from the cities, just as they had vanished from the battlefields where they had appeared at the time of the revolutionary wars." Yes, in the cities too, the masses have revealed their impotence. After the First World War it becomes clear that the masses are not able to gather autonomously in an assembly; they can only do so thanks to the formation of "security units" (*Schutzstaffeln*, *Saalschutz*) and other organizations of the sort. This is evidently an allusion to the SS (which, indeed, stands fo

*Schutzstaffeln*) and to the other paramilitary corps of the Nazi party. Jünger's passionate admiration is directed to them, and in fact he concludes his argument as such: We are in the presence of "a completely different type of man" (*ein ganz anderer Menschenschlag*), distinguished from those who form the masses. The masses will ultimately reveal themselves to be impotent, even in the battles waged for political power. These battles can no longer be won through numbers, but rather depend upon "assault troops which are ready" for action and for struggle, and which are prepared to seize the vital centers of "cities housing government buildings."[15]

In the meantime, technology can be fully restored, since it is snatched away from the world of bourgeois security: "the bourgeois man is not able to apply technology as an instrument of power [*Machtmittel*] suitable to his *Dasein*. Technology is no longer synonymous with comfort; its true significance [is not] progress, but dominion," and it manifests an "intrinsic character of power [*Machtcharakter*] which excludes any economic or progressive element."[16] Jünger condemns the "era of masses and machines,"[17] an era characterized by the "dictatorship of economic thought in and of itself" (which emerges not only on a politico-social level, but also on a scientific level, as an "economical interpretation of the world"). He then proceeds to indicate the alternative to this unfortunate dominion of calculative thought (to which socialism and marxism fully belong). It is the will to power: "the worker's declaration of independence from the economic world" is brought about by the rediscovery of "power as power," of the "will to power."[18]

Once it has become synonymous with the will to power, technology can blend in with the other key elements of the *Kriegsideologie*: above all with the denunciation of the "utopia of bourgeois security," and with the celebration of the warrior, the "born warrior," as opposed to the vile "shopkeeper." The difference is that now this warrior, armed to the teeth, can make full use of the weapons that modern technology provides him with: "In this sense, the motor is not the dominator. . . . It is the daring toy of a type of man who is able to explode in the air with joy," thus proving his "heroic realism."[19] In this way, the acceptance or the exaltation of technology can mesh with the themes of "destiny" and "sacrifice" (technology itself now reveals a "ritual origin"),[20] and even with the theme of *Gemeinschaft*. Technology is only apparently analogous to disorder and anarchy; in reality, not only does it break the dominion of the masses, but it also constitutes "the necessary step that

leads to new hierarchies,"[21] that is, to that "warlike community" which was exalted by Jünger and by the *Kriegsideologie*.

The position held by Jünger, Spengler, and others with regard to technology has sometimes been called "reactionary modernism."[22] This category is undoubtedly legitimate and even rather useful, but only on two conditions: one, the adjective "reactionary" must subsume not only the rejection of liberalism, democracy, and socialism, but also the obstinately archaizing themes of the *Kriegsideologie*; and two, one must not lose sight of the contradictions that result from associating these two terms, contradictions which make the balance between modernism and reaction to it ever more precarious and unstable. This is evident especially in Spengler: removed from, and even opposed to, the "materialism of *Zivilisation*," technology becomes an expression of "life" and of the struggle which characterizes it (perceived, "in the Nietzschean sense, as a struggle that starts from the will to power, cruel, inexorable and merciless"); ultimately, it becomes an expression of war.[23] On the one hand Spengler condemns the tendency to flee from the "machine" and from the "big cities" as a symptom of decadence; on the other hand, in the same text which he dedicates to the reevaluation of technology, the machine and the "big cities" are condemned as an expression, and at the same time as an instrument, of a life characterized by "*panem et circenses*."[24] Even more bitter is Spengler's criticism of "urban, rootless intellectualism" and of "the arrogance of the urban, uprooted spirit, one that is no longer guided by a strong instinct, and which looks down upon the fervent [*blutvoll*] philosophy of the past and the wisdom of generations of farmers."[25] The exaltation of the city as the privileged place for technology and for the industrial production carried out in preparation for war is in contradiction to the denouncement of the city as a stronghold of the "masses" and ideological subversion (on the part of "professional demagogues"). It is thus in contrast to the admonishment of the revolutionary uprisings which have torn Europe apart, and which aim at establishing "*the dictatorship of the proletariat in the big cities*."[26] Germany's immediate needs in the struggle to regain hegemony in Europe force Spengler to rehabilitate technology (and urban civilization itself). At the same time, from a historical and philosophical point of view he cannot help but condemn the plebeian leveling process carried out by the city.

This contradiction appears irremediable, and it remains as such, even within Nazi ideology. On the one hand, on a political and cultural level

there are currents that not only enthusiastically exalt technology, but likewise reject any criticism of it as an expression of a sort of "left-wing cultural Luddism," which is incompatible with the regime and with Germany's needs.[27] On the other hand, by insisting on the ideology of "blood and soil," Nazism keeps alive the hope of a regeneration of society, one that will be able to halt and reverse the processes of industrialization and urbanization. The desired outcome would be a return to the land and to the soil, and a limitation and marginalization of the dangerous, materialistic contamination identified with the big cities. This is a theme that arouses nostalgia and inspires utopias of regression in more than just a few social strata, and one that finds its expression in magazines, manifestos, and even novels.

The idea of a regeneration of society and of a return to the soil extends its influence upon some major figures of the regime, and perhaps even upon Heinrich Himmler.[28] On the other hand, Hitler himself, before the Nazi rise to power, formulates a program that seeks to remove "industry and commerce" from their unsound leading position, thus rebalancing the "relationship between the population of the country and that of the city." According to the analysis in *Mein Kampf*, Germany's catastrophe is to be imputed above all to her "unrestrained and harmful industrialization," and to the resultant "weakening of the agricultural class," which occurs to the advantage of the uprooted "masses, the metropolitan proletariat." The result is not only "class division" and the disintegration of the old organic community, but also the ruinous "economization of the nation," and widespread "degeneration": "[T]he economy becomes the absolute owner of the State, and money becomes the God to whom everything is subordinate and before whom everyone must bow down. More and more, the heavenly gods, now out of date, are put aside, and in their place the idol of Mammon is worshipped."[29]

Certainly, Hitler's dark description of the consequences of industrialization and urbanization also serves to justify his plan to expand eastward by presenting it as a necessary condition for Germany's desired return to the soil. But the idea of the return to the soil is taken seriously in many circles that identify with Walter Darré, the minister of agriculture and the author of a book dedicated to the exaltation of the *New Nobility of the Blood and Soil* (*Neuadel aus Blut und Boden*). In it, he paints a black picture of the city: It is a place of uprooting (it is impossible to feel "intimately linked" to a "sea of rocks"); it is a place of standardization and of leveling (it dishes up mass-produced "individuals");

and it is even a place of "parasitism" (it does not have an autonomous life, but it is like an "octopus," which draws "nourishment from the surroundings" with its tentacles). In any case, "the German soul will die if it is deprived of the countryside from which it was born."[30]

As we shall see (cf. *infra*, chap. 5, § 3), when the Nazis rise to power, a wide political press and narrative is formed around the party and the regime. Condemnation of the city and the concomitant exaltation of the "eternal field" (*ewiger Acker*) and the "sacred soil" (*heiliger Boden*) sometimes take on truly apocalyptic tones. There cannot be but disappointment in the face of a political policy that, in order to rapidly develop the military and the war economy, does not hesitate to accelerate the desertion of the countryside and to admit women into industry,[31] thus speeding up the "uprooting process." The supporters of the blood-and-soil ideal demand that the ideology for which they embraced the regime be put into practice. This creates tensions and contradictions, though they do not come to a breaking point: We need only to remember that it is not until 1942 that Walter Darré is removed from his position as Minister of Agriculture, and this is done with great caution as he continues to enjoy the attention and respect of the regime.

## 2. NIETZSCHE, THE WILL TO POWER, AND THE STRUGGLE AGAINST NIHILISM

Even Heidegger and Jaspers reveal a tendency to contrast the will to power to calculative thought; for Jaspers this is the case at least during the early 1930s. The ideal of the will to power seems to be an efficacious antidote to the standardized, technicized world, a world that lacks any tragical sense, a "time of mass accumulation and mass domination, of universal utilitarianism, crushing misery, and banal happiness."[32] In 1932, in reference to Weber, Jaspers admiringly observes: "He regarded, in a political perspective, *the life and power of the German people* as the condition *sine qua non*."[33] Significantly enough, Jaspers refers to Weber's assertion made in 1895, according to which the working class lacks even a "spark of that Catilinean drive to action" present in the protagonists of the French Revolution. Jaspers, in turn, adds: "It [the working class] lacked the great instincts of power."[34] What Jaspers now considers "admirable" is "the will to power pervaded by the spirit"[35] and the state's "political praxis of power" (*politisches Machtpragma*).[36]

With regard to Hitler's rise to power, Heidegger exalts the accomplished liberation from the "idolatry of a rootless and powerless philosophy [*boden-und machtlos*]." It is not just one isolated passage. On the contrary, it has been noted that the rectorial speech "is full of expressions and metaphors which relate to will and to power"; one might even say that it is "dominated by a metaphysics of the 'will to power.' "[37] At this moment, roots and power seem as one; the criticism of the machine and of calculative thought is not yet the criticism of the will to power, but the criticism of a world which is violently questioned by Nietzsche, and by the very ideal of the will to power.

Above all, at this moment, Nietzsche is a pioneer in the struggle against nihilism. In order to understand this point, however, we should once again proceed with the First World War, during which the struggle of the "metaphysical people" against *Zivilisation* is exalted in Germany as the struggle "against Western nihilism." This expression is Thomas Mann's, for whom "the enlightenment of Western Europe, that is, the politics of reason and the progress of liberalism, [is] essentially nihilistic."[38] And this struggle against "decadence and nihilism" is also, or above all, led by Nietzsche, who is credited with contrasting the "idea of life" to democratic radicalism and to the *Zivilisation* of Germany's enemies.[39] These themes are still present even after 1918. According to Spengler, democracy is indissolubly tied to nihilism by virtue of its plebeian hatred and resentment for any superior culture, and through its leveling and uprooting tendency, which aims at extirpating the "historical" forms of culture by means of internationalistic keywords. And it is precisely because of its intrinsic nihilism that democracy "is already Bolshevism."[40] Nazism inherits this theme from the *Kriegsideologie*, and exalts its own rise to power as Germany's reawakening from the darkness of nihilism.[41]

It is within this same political and cultural framework that we can locate Heidegger's position as expressed a few years after Hitler's rise to power. The unity of Europe and of the West is reestablished by way of the struggle against antimetaphysical superficiality and nihilism (in 1935 the term "metaphysics" has a positive connotation). Nihilism is certainly "Bolshevism," "mere socialism";[42] but nihilism is also democracy: "Europe—Heidegger continues—wants, now and forever, to cling to 'democracy,' and cannot seem to accept the fact that this would constitute her historical death. In fact, as Nietzsche clearly saw, democracy is merely a variation of nihilism."[43] In this period, far from being synony-

mous with nihilism, Nietzsche appears to Heidegger as the inspirer of a vigorous and promising counter-tendency. "Mussolini and Hitler—he declares in 1936—the two men who introduced a counter-movement against nihilism, were both influenced, though in two essentially different ways, by Nietzsche."[44] Above all, Nietzsche has the merit of tracing the origin of nihilism to Christianity. "Reason," "scientific-social socialism," "mere democracy," "infinite progress and the happiness of the greatest number" are more or less secularized variations of Christianity.[45]

Despite the debate with Baeumler, at this moment Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche contains some political *motifs* that seem to refer back to the cultural climate of the Third Reich. For one, Nazism is the only political movement that is not properly and globally subsumed under the category of nihilism. It is true that, in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, some aspects of the regime are also condemned as expressions of the "greatest nihilism." Though in this case, the criticism is limited to the unavoidable standardization that contaminates even Nazi Germany. Sure, " 'cultural goods' (movies and trips to the shore), from which 'the greatest number' had been excluded up till now, have been made equally accessible to all people." But this does not represent the overcoming of nihilism; on the contrary, nihilism manifests itself in a particularly sensational way, in the "boisterous intoxication of the 'lived experience,' " in the "organized, voluntary blindness before man's lack of goals."[46] Thus, nihilism coincides with standardization and "organization," both of which are expressions of the uprooting and loss of historicity. By virtue of its position in contrast to modernity, and to the dangerous advance of democracy (which threatens Europe with "historical death"), Nazism may be an important element in the struggle to defend historicity, and to oppose nihilism. In this framework, one can well understand the rigorous line of continuity that is established, under the banner of nihilism, between Christianity, democracy, progressivism, social democracy, and Bolshevism.

This theme, which is widespread throughout the Third Reich, leads Heidegger to discern in Nietzsche's work, anachronistically, a condemnation of "Bolshevism": "According to Nietzsche—he observes—Christianity is just as nihilistic as Bolshevism, and thus socialism."[47] This explains Heidegger's vehement criticism of the Concordat between the new regime and the Catholic Church.[48] In Heidegger's view, the resolute struggle against nihilism demands a confrontation with Christianity as well. For this reason, at the outbreak of the civil war in Spain,

he warns against interpreting the conflict as a clash between communist nihilism and Christian antinihilism. In reality, they are two "opposing forms [*Gegenformen*] of nihilism." "The main issue is not whether churches and convents are destroyed and people are murdered, or whether all this does not occur, and 'Christianity' can move on its way." Certainly, it is legitimate and proper to confront "what might be called vulgar [*grob*] nihilism (for example, Bolshevism)." What is evident here is Heidegger's support of the policy of intervention in Spain that is implemented by Mussolini and Hitler, two promoters of the "countermovement against nihilism." But this is not enough, and it is necessary to proceed further. Not by chance, after condemning the standardized organization of the workmen's club as another form of nihilism, Heidegger denounces in it "the 'resolute' [*einsatzbereit*] escape from any goal-oriented decision."[49] The irony is bitter: The term *Einsatz* is particularly dear to the Nazis who, however, are now accused of not being up to their claims of courage and extreme decision. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Heidegger is interrupting his dialogue with the regime. Rather, he is urging it to formalize the virulent anti-Christian sentiment expressed in certain publications, and especially in the private talks of many of its leaders, above all Hitler.

What is also significant is Heidegger's interpretation of Nietzsche's criticism of religion. In it, there is an obvious effort to expunge Voltaire's admirer. According to Heidegger, Nietzsche has none of the "indifference and destructive longing typical of idle freethought [*eitle Freidenkerei*]."[50] Nietzsche cannot even be considered an atheist: on the contrary, his philosophy is the "opposite of 'atheism.' "[51] "His assertion that 'God is dead' is not a negation, but the most intimate 'yes' to the coming God." He is fully aware that "without a God and without Gods, historical existence is impossible."[52] We are back to the criticism of Bolshevism that, because of its atheism, is excluded not only from European historicity, but from historicity in and of itself. What is dead is thus only the moral, Christian God: His is an irreversible death, and the "artful movements of religious renovation," which presume to deny or to elude this irreversibility, are among "the most dangerous nihilistic forces."[53] Heidegger's position is hostile to Christianity (and, even more, to "freethought" and to atheism), and is characterized by the expectation of a new religion that will resume and "repeat" the lesson of ancient Greece; in this sense, his position has some points in common with the neopagan themes and ideas that circulate in the culture of the Third Reich.

Heidegger refers to Nietzsche in the struggle against nihilism and its various manifestations (primarily democracy), by which the Western world is constantly and haplessly attacked. For this reason, Nietzsche must not only be regarded as the "end," as the conclusion of the nihilistic itinerary of the West, but also as a "passage"; more precisely, he should be regarded as the end of the first beginning of Western philosophy, and as the passage to the "second beginning [*Anfang*]." "Passage [*Übergang*]: it is the highest compliment that can be paid to a thinker."[54] But "passage" is not only Nietzsche; it is also the "Western historical position" that he represents.[55] Thus, understanding Nietzsche means understanding the historical era traversed by the West.

In this regard, Heidegger seems to want to promote a sort of slogan: "Learning to know Nietzsche as Western destiny and as a *motif* of unity [*unsere Sammlung*], this is our task."[56] Immediately after the Nazi rise to power, Heidegger observes that the events that have just occurred arouse in him an *ungewöhnlich sammelnde Kraft*, an extraordinary urge to converge and unite.[57] In his rectorial speech, which renders homage to Nietzsche by calling him "the last German philosopher who looks for God," Heidegger calls for "enduring unity [*Sammlung*] in the supreme service of the people."[58] In a letter to Schmitt, dated August 1933, which ends, significantly enough, with *Heil Hitler!*, Heidegger again appeals for the "union [*Sammlung*] of the spiritual forces that must accomplish the new." Later on, Heidegger will declare that he saw in Nazism the possibility for "an interior unity [*Sammlung*] of the [German] people."[59] In 1933 and in the years immediately following, the unity centered around the new regime is also the unity centered around Nietzsche. He is the philosopher who represents the "passage." At the same time, the Western world, is also experiencing an *Übergang*, a passage certainly difficult but nonetheless oriented towards a new beginning. The West is witnessing the revelation of a promising perspective thanks to the new situation which has formed in Germany, the "center" of the West.

Despite the violent criticism addressed against him by Heidegger,[60] and of that he is unaware, Jaspers expresses a quite similar view with regard to Nietzsche. Once again, what he admires is certainly not the philosopher who praises Voltaire and the desecrating drive of the Enlightenment. On the contrary, Jaspers harshly criticizes the way that "modernity" has exploited Nietzsche's philosophy as a sort of "grandiose aesthetic stimulus" and as an instrument used to dissolve

"what is left of every tie," and to further promote nihilism.[61] In those years, Nietzsche is instead interpreted and celebrated even by Jaspers as the pioneer of the struggle against nihilism, which is analyzed and denounced from Christianity onward. Already in *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, after defining nihilism, with explicit reference to Nietzsche, as the "radical rejection of value, sense, and desirability," Jaspers notes that placing "every value in an afterworld" means professing a "de facto nihilism with regards to every reality."[62]

A line of continuity leads from Christianity to the world of modern politics. The thesis that Heidegger infers from Nietzsche is supported, despite some mitigations and distinctions, by Jaspers too, who, still in 1938, writes:

> In liberalism, socialism, and democracy—despite their anti-Christian position—Nietzsche essentially recognizes the result of debilitated Christianity. In them, Christianity continues to live; they are comfortable, Christian-born lies expressed in a worldy form. Philosophy, ethics, modern Humanism [*Humanität*] and the ideals of equality in particular, are ideals which are secretly Christian.

Precisely because of its Christian origin, the modern world is deeply convinced that

> the weak one, inasmuch as he is impotent, must be helped; the biological being-a-man [*das biologische Menschsein*] already justifies, through *Dasein*, the ambition for all that is possible only for a high-class man, and every imbecile and spiritless individual [*Dummkopf und Geistfremde*] must learn that which is due only to a man endowed with originally vital ideas.[63]

## 3. Mechanization and Standardization: Heidegger and Jaspers

Heidegger's support of Nazism and Jaspers's proximity to it can never be situated within the realm of reactionary modernism. "The 1914 war"—writes Sombart—is also "Nietzsche's war."[64] But from Nietzsche, Heidegger and Jaspers gather, above all, the lesson regarding the relationship between technology and standardization, or democracy: "By means of its own example, the machine teaches human crowds to engage

in activities in which each person has only one thing to do," so that individuals lose their autonomy and end up becoming "*one single* machine."[65] Perhaps as a comment on this aphorism, Jaspers observes, in 1938, that Nietzsche had the merit of painting "the frightening portrait of the modern world," of exposing "the desolation and frantic nature of work and profit [*Erwerb*] . . . , the significance of the machine and the mechanization of labor, and the coming of the masses."[66] In turn, two years later, Heidegger cites Nietzsche's aphorism in its entirety in order to draw attention to the close relationship between the "age of the machine" and standardization, and to denounce, still in reference to Nietzsche, "the accomplished plebeian character of science."[67]

Jaspers gives credit to Nietzsche for contrasting "the tragic truth of the pre-Socratic Greeks' life" to the modern Christian world. The latter is characterized by a tremendous cultural impoverishment, by the "decay of culture" (*Kultur*) to the advantage of its vile substitute: the "din of a semblance of spirit." It is also characterized by a "knowledge" without a center and without an authentic spiritual tension. This is the very same contrast between *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* that plays such an important role in the *Kriegsideologie*. Heidegger explicitly speaks of *Zivilisation* as the era of the "unlimited dominion of machination [*Machenschaft*]," of "calculation," of "calculability." It is not the era of "disenchantment" (*Entzauberung*)—the criticism against Weber, though only allusive, is clear—on the contrary, it is a total "spell" (*Verzauberung*) or "bewitchment [*Behexung*] carried out by technology."[68]

Such radical criticism of the modern world of technology and calculative thought cannot help but stir up tensions within the regime. Already in August of 1933, Heidegger expresses concern that the new Germany might overemphasize "organization."[69] His preoccupation becomes more and more serious, but never reaches a breaking point. Some critics, who use Heidegger's assertions in order to depict him as a representative of the opposition, seem to ignore altogether the contradictions and the struggles, sometimes bitter ones, within the Nazi movement and the Third Reich.

We should therefore investigate the problem more thoroughly and focus upon the apocalyptic denunciations of urban and industrial civilization that flourish in those years and that portray the contemporary metropolis as the place of a repulsive dystopia. In a novel from 1932, the white race becomes the master of the earth, but its dominion entails the abandonment of the country and of the soil, and the transformation of

the planet, or at least of the industrialized West, into a desolate landscape of death. The "valleys" and the "rich cornfields" have disappeared: "The big cities had swallowed up all of the people. . . . The big cities were the brain of the world. . . . The brain was bloodless, the brain had to die. The fertile countryside had become a steppe." In another novel, published in 1935, the catastrophe brought about by technical civilization is represented by a population: "the grey metal-workers" (*graucn Metaller*). They spread on the earth, destroying every form of life tied to nature, and then tear each other to pieces during fierce power struggles, leaving behind a completely devastated land that, only after several centuries, manages, slowly and miraculously, to rise from the ashes. This narrative offers no opposition, and sometimes it even makes reference to some authors who are directly committed to the exaltation of the regime.

However, given the political and ideological context we are examining, what is particularly significant is another novel, published in 1937, which describes the desolation of a world State unified on the basis of "materialism" and the "communist conception of society." In it, technology has swallowed up all that was natural, and transformed even the act of reproduction into a mechanical process. The only opposition is represented by a "poet," who manages to find some followers, but only with difficulty.[70]

The proximity to some of Heidegger's beloved themes is evident. Certainly, one must avoid hasty assimilations, but the parallel suggested here responds to a different logic: it aims at abandoning the stereotypes of the ideological monolithism of the Nazi regime, and at revealing its inner contradictions; only in this way can one understand the relationship between Heidegger and the political situation of his time. Heidegger, too, passionately denounces "the darkening of the world and the destruction of the Earth," the "standardization," the "uprooting," the "pressing loss of historicity" (*anwälzende Geschichtslosigkeit*), the "desertion of being as a dissolution of the West, the escape of the gods";[71] and all of this in connection to the ruinous "bewitchment carried out by technology."[72] Heidegger, however, is very far from a break with the regime, and this is confirmed by a simple consideration: this catastrophic evaluation of modernity involves Nazi Germany to a far lesser degree than her antagonists (and this aspect, too, takes us back to the apocalyptic novels we mentioned). At this moment, and in the following years, the countries that come to symbolize the lack or loss of historicity and the escape of the gods are the Soviet Union and the United States. If Germany is criticized,

it is only inasmuch as, despite the new regime and the promising start, it does not succeed in winning the struggle against the modern world. And this is why, in such a catastrophic evaluation of modernity and technology, there seems to be no room for the denunciation of the terroristic bombings carried out by the Nazi air force during the Spanish Civil War, for example (which is, nonetheless, discussed by Heidegger).

The fact is that the Third Reich, despite its limitations and inconsistencies, continues to exert for Heidegger a useful control over the threats that loom over the West: "The battle against destruction and uprooting is only the first step in the preparation, a step that leads closer to the authentic space of decision."[73] Heidegger dispels any possible doubts as to his loyalty to the regime:

> The dominion of the masses which have become free (and therefore rootless and selfish) must [*muß*] be established and maintained by means of the fetters of "organization" [no criticism or reservation is expressed about the terror which is raging in Nazi Germany]. But is it possible for what is "organized" in this way to grow back [*zurückwachsen*] to its primal foundations [*Gründe*] and not only block, but *transform* the nature of the masses [*das Massenhafte*]? . . . Nobody should underestimate the opposition and resistance to the inexorable uprooting [*Entwurzelung*]; on the contrary, it is the first thing that one must resort to [and again support for dictatorship reemerges]. But can this opposition and its measures also guarantee the transformation of the uprooting into a rooting [*Verwandlung der Entwurzelung in eine Verwurzelung*]?[74]

Germany had the useful function of controlling and subduing the most ruinous manifestations of modernity, but would it be able to overcome modernity in and of itself? Would it succeed in really putting an end to the uprooting? The doubt upon this point can be perceived, even painfully so, but this does not lessen the certainty that Nazi Germany has a useful ordering function in a world that is prey to a frightening imbalance, and this certainty silences any reservations regarding methods that, however unpleasant, still serve to avoid ultimate ruin.

By this token, *Beiträge zur Philosophie* (written between 1936 and 1938) does not represent a real change of direction from the *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (which is dated 1935). Here we read:

> If the spirit is reduced to intellectuality [*Intelligenz*]—and Marxism leads this reduction to the extreme—then it is perfectly justified to say

> that, in regulating the active forces of human *Dasein*, one must constantly subordinate the spirit, that is, intellectualism, to physical industriousness and to character: this is the way to resist that reduction.

It is right to make subversive intellectuals innocuous; but what space is left for the spirit in a strong and noble sense of the term? Is the important, determining function that philosophy (above all Heidegger's) has in the new Germany adequately understood? Is there awareness of the fact that even the "resoluteness and boldness of the sword," the country's military force, does not merely reside in technical-organizational efficiency? That it is ultimately based on a philosophical and poetical thought able to defeat modernity[75] and "recover solid roots [*Bodenständigkeit*] in historical *Dasein*?"[76]

Heidegger also supports some small measures taken by the regime. Immediately after the *Machtergreifung*, Nazi students campaign in favor of a sort of linguistic purging: "The purity of the language and of the literary production depends on you! Your people have put you in charge of faithfully watching over the language."[77] As for Heidegger: "The organizations for the purification of the language and against its progressive degradation deserve some respect." In this case, too, the "organization" has a positive, but limited, function. What is necessary is an "authentic revolution in relationship to language," one must "revolutionize the teachers." Language, however, refers in turn to being; and therefore, the political revolution cannot be considered complete without a radical cultural and philosophical transformation, without rethinking the "fundamental conception of being" in such a way as to sweep away modernity and its rubble."[78] It is within this same context that we can place Heidegger's preoccupation, continuously expressed to Löwith, in Rome, regarding the excessive importance attributed to "organization" (*Organisieren*) in the new Germany. Nonetheless, this preoccupation does not prevent Heidegger from wearing the insignia of the Nazi party and from underscoring the link between his category of "historicity" and the new regime.

With regard to the regime, Heidegger continues to prove his loyalty, but this does not mean that there are no contradictions within his relationship with the Third Reich, and above all, with one of its political and ideological currents. We noted Spengler's ironic comments with regard to the representation of Germany as a people of "thinkers and poets." In 1935, Heidegger is forced to criticize the thesis (clearly a product of

reactionary modernism) according to which "metaphysics did not contribute to preparing the revolution [that is, the Nazi rise to power], and is therefore to be rejected": In reality—Heidegger observes—even though "never directly," but always "mediated," metaphysics plays an important role in the configuration of a people's historico-spiritual world.[79] Thus, there is criticism, but only with regard to the common appeal to "revolution." It would be thoroughly misleading to identify the entire ideology of the Third Reich with reactionary modernism. Even in Hitler himself, it is possible to detect some fluctuations and contradictions. On the one hand, the total mobilization in view of the war and of a brutal policy of imperialistic expansion demands a break with the great, classical tradition of German culture. And so, shortly after his rise to power, the Führer comments ironically, not unlike Spengler, upon the representation of Germany as a "people of singers, poets and thinkers," unable to carry out a realistic policy or to contend with neighboring countries for hegemony.[80] Inasmuch as he is involved in the immediate needs of the conflict, Hitler cannot help but identify with reactionary modernism: "We were once a vigorous people. Little by little we became a people of thinkers and poets. Poets, I can accept—because nobody takes them seriously—but the world is full of 'thinkers.' "[81]

The target of this criticism is above all the universalism of the classic tradition, the tendency to theorize the "right over the stars," that is, in terms of universal validity. Consequently, one is deprived of "foundation [*Boden*] in the earth," and loses sight of the "affirmation of one's life."[82] What is rejected is a "spirit" with no *Boden* and *Bodenständigkeit*, and therefore uprooted and subversive (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 3). Though in fact, on other occasions, a very different point of view is affirmed. This is how Hitler expresses himself in a speech addressed to some officers who were about to leave for the Russian front: "The true national heritage is constituted by the manifold *inventors* and *thinkers*, by the *poets*, as well as by the great *statesmen* and *leaders*."[83] On the one hand, the technical and productive needs of the war lean toward reactionary modernism. On the other hand, the need to propel an ideological mobilization and to excite nationalistic passion drives in the opposite direction: It encourages the celebration of Germany as a "population of thinkers," and presents German as "the most precious and beautiful [language] for thinkers," the only language that can really "go beyond generally accepted facts and representations."[84]

This theme is clearly reminiscent of Heidegger who, despite some

contradictions with the regime, certainly does not break with it. All the more so since a branch of the Third Reich, diametrically opposed to that of reactionary modernism, exalts Germany as the "people actually formed by philosophers and thinkers." These are the words of Darré, who, it seems, even met Heidegger on one occasion. We do not know whether this information, which is given without further details by the politician's biographer,[85] is reliable. And, perhaps, it is not even particularly relevant. The important thing is not to lose sight of the contradictions within the regime when we analyze Heidegger's relationship to it.

With regard to this, we might posit the following conclusion: the denunciation of modernity is at the same time a point in common with Nazism, and a possible critical confrontation with it. The first aspect is immediately evident: the condemnation of modernity is also the condemnation of liberalism, democracy, socialism, standardization, and the political world against which Nazism has waged war. Hitler denounces Marxism as a "theory of the masses," and singles out the "value principle of the majority" and "the masses number" as the cause of the dissolution and ruin of the "community of people."[86] This position is not opposed by Heidegger who, instead, continues along the same lines, as is evident from this note in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*: "The invasion of the masses [*der Aufbruch des Massenhaften*]. This term does not only refer to the 'masses' in a 'social' sense; the masses prevail because what is valuable is the number and that which can be quantified, that is, what is equally accessible to everyone."[87] Thus, the real and permanent solution to the problem is the eventual battle against calculative thought and modernity. And here begins the critical confrontation with Nazism.

## 4. Totality, Calculative Thought, and Standardization

Could Nazism really accomplish such an ambitious plan? It would not be able to do so through the usual pathos of the *Weltanschauung*, a category that, according to Heidegger, reeks of modernity and liberalism. And undoubtedly it would not be able to do so through the so-called total *Weltanschauung*. By substituting the authentic, risky, and solitary creative process for a technical organization of culture, the *Betrieb*, this total *Weltanschauung*, carries with it the mark of the modern world's standardization, a standardization that, nonetheless, it has the ambition

of fighting.[88] This criticism of the "total vision of the world" has been interpreted as a condemnation of the "totalitarianism of the Nazi State."[89] But if we choose not to indulge in this game of association of ideas, or worse, assonances of ideas, and proceed instead with a concrete historical analysis, then we come to a very different conclusion. The terms "totalitarian" or "totalitarianism" are not welcomed by the representatives and ideologists of the Third Reich who, if at all, use them polemically in reference to the Soviet Union.[90]

The idea of a "total State," is also looked upon with suspicion; indeed, according to Goebbels, it would be a "serious mistake" to want to apply it to the Nazi regime.[91] Such an association—another ideologist continues—would facilitate the propaganda spread by Germany's enemies, those who presume to arbitrarily assimilate "the new Reich with other total States." Moreover, it would create a problem—Rosenberg points out—because the center of attention would be the state as a "mechanistic apparatus" (that is, as an expression of the objectivity of juridical order) rather than the "people," organized by the Nazi "movement" and led by a Führer who is himself a source of rights. Thus, it would be more appropriate to speak of the "totality [*Ganzheit*, or *Totalität*] of National Socialist world vision."[92] It is very likely, then, that Heidegger's criticism of the "total vision of the world" is aimed at Rosenberg, and at the circles that surround him.

This, however, does not signify a separation from the Third Reich. The "total Christian faith" is also criticized; and indeed the Nazi regime is accused of having made a "compromise" (*Ausgleich*) with it—the Concordat[93]—instead of committing itself to the de-Christianization program that Heidegger has at heart and that, if put into practice, would certainly not mitigate the totalitarian character of the Third Reich. But Heidegger can in no way approve of the compromise made with Catholicism and, in general, with the Christian religion which, in his point of view, embodies the beginning of modernity: Ideologists such as Rosenberg may well exalt the National Socialist "vision of the world" as "total," but the policy of the Concordat exposes the intrinsic "liberal" character of the *Weltanschauungen* theory, a fact that Heidegger has already insisted upon.

Heidegger is certainly not the only one to look upon the category of totality with suspicion. If, on the one hand, this category might be useful in justifying both the elimination of any opposition as well as the "total" mobilization required by the war or by the preparation for the war, on the other hand it carries with it clear signs of a hideous revolutionary tra-

dition. "Total" had been the indelible mark with which Burke had branded the French Revolution,[94] constantly referred to by the regime as one of the main stages of the catastrophe of the West. And besides, wasn't the category of totality tied to that of universality, which had been unanimously attacked by the *Kriegsideologie*? It is in this sense that, in contrast to the ideology of the regime, Husserl exalts, in 1934, "the total idea [*Totalidee*] of an autonomous link embracing all of humanity."[95] On the other hand, even though in a completely different context and with a different political significance, in Italy, Croce himself speaks of liberalism and of the religion of liberty as "a total conception of the world and reality."[96] According to Schmitt, it was the French Revolution (and then the Bolshevik Revolution) that brought about the "pan-interventional worldwide ideology" (*pan-interventionistische Welt-Ideologie*),[97] against which Germany had been fighting since at least the First World War. The definition of "total vision of the world," when applied to Nazism, runs the risk of dangerously resembling the definition of pan-ideology, which referred to the ideas born of the French Revolution (or the Bolshevik Revolution). Schmitt solves this problem by pointing out that the "the premise for *völkisch* totality is . . . the pluralistic character of the political world and of the objective spirit"; and thus, the "ambition for totality" present in Nazism, and in *völkisch* ideology, does not desire the possesion of a "universalistic character."[98] Bollnow proceeds along these same lines when, referring to Heidegger, he exalts concrete totality, that is, a determined community or historicity, as opposed to the *Ganzheit* so dear to Othmar Spann. This *Ganzheit*, or totality, reeks of "Catholicism," "not in a confessional sense," but to the extent that it is analogous to universalism. This universal totality presupposes a "harmonious image of the world" (*harmonisches Weltbild*), where there is no place for unique "historicity," "struggle," or the agonistic spirit and tragic vision of life.[99] Already before the Nazi rise to power, Schmitt criticizes the ambition to juxtapose "to the concrete reality of these plural structures, totalities [*Ganzheiten*] which encompass the world."[100] Inasmuch as totality is synonymous with universality, both the *Kriegsideologie* and Nazism accuse the Western democracies and the Soviet Union of a totalitarian universalism that is somehow totalitarianism. It is within this framework that one must situate Heidegger's criticism, which in *Einführung in die Metaphysik* is directed against universal totalities, the *Ganzheiten*; while in *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, it is aimed at the "total vision of the world." On the other hand, we are already familiar with Heidegger's criticism of

Rosenberg and the ideologists who surround him: He accuses them of being unable to theorize in depth the rejection and the overcoming of liberalism and of modernity (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 7).

In another respect, as well, the category of totality seems to refer, even more than to the exalted essence of Germany, to that of her enemies. In a text written at more or less the same time as Heidegger's *Beiträge*, Franz Böhm, a distinguished ideologist of the regime, denounces the "total rationalism" and the "total mechanism" characteristic of the ruinous course of modernity.[101] The category of totality appears here to be inextricably linked to calculative thought. Criticism of the latter is prominent in the ideologists of the Third Reich as well. They inherit it from the *Kriegsideologie*, which is permeated with the denunciation of banausic bourgeois security and the heavy, shallow utilitarianism of the *Zivilisation* characteristic of Germany's enemies. Reading Böhm, the continuity between the criticism of *Zivilisation* and the criticism of calculative thought seems obvious:

> Descartes thought he was at the *start* of a path that would lead humanity once and for all to the *security* of its existence. He stole the *forces* from nature so as to control them within a mechanical quantification. He dug up the dangerous depths of the human soul, he ousted chance and put destiny in chains. He made history so indifferent, that the seriousness of historical decisions lost any sense of apprehension.[102]

Through the "destruction" of "historicity," Descartes "gave rise to a frighteningly widespread flattening of historical consciousness, which is the saddest sign of modernity."[103]

With regard to man's relationship with nature, the consequences are no less serious. "Descartes's total mechanism" entailed the "integral *reification* of any mundane content," and the "*alienation* and integral objectivization of the world," which is by now regarded as "an infinite sum of parts with no qualities, and thus no value, parts which can only be linked by an ordering consciousness."[104] What ensued from this was an unrestrained will to power. Descartes brought about "the reduction of concrete reality to *rationally controllable* reality, or rather, the identification between controllable-being and real-being." And thus, "by way of a reason that rises to power [*selbstmächtige Vernunft*], there opens the possibility of exercising a mediated dominion over the world."[105]

We can therefore understand Böhm's denunciation of "modernity's subversive scientific ambition" (*unstürzender Wissenschaftsanspruch der*

*Moderne*)[106] and "rational titanism" which is "the *ethos* of this philosophy and of modernity in general. . . . Man has become 'free' and sees the guarantee of his freedom in the *opposition* to any reality. Decision, which has the power to intensify any moment, has been superseded by a faith in infinite planning, which unconditionally places the future in the hands of man."[107] Descartes's theories lead to Auguste Comte's positivism, which has the ambition of transforming men into "masters and owners of nature [*maîtres et possesseurs de la nature*]" and inaugurating that "positive" era which, since Nietzsche, had been revealed as the era of the "last man."[108] For Böhm, too, the history of calculative thought is, in the final analysis, the history of "nihilism."[109]

The influence of the *Kriegsideologie* on Böhm is already evident in the subtitle of his work, which exalts the "resistance" of "German philosophy" to Cartesianism and to modernity as well as "to the empty mechanism of the seventeenth century and the enlightened rarefaction of the world's contents into mere intellectualism and mere utility; in other words, resistance to the philosophically embellished chaos of world visions in contemporary Europe."[110] All of this, to include "logical-systematic philosophy," is put in contrast—this theme, too, is reminiscent of Heidegger—to the "disclosing philosophy [*erschließendes Denken*] which opens up reality," and which is not traversed by the logic of dominion, but is, on the contrary, "liberating" (*freilegend*). This philosophy is characteristic of the German people and appears, instead, "incomprehensible and mysterious to the Western sense of order."[111]

Böhm, too, seems to reject the positions of reactionary modernism. It should be clear by now that neither the criticism of the category of totality nor the criticism of calculative thought represent, in and of themselves, a break with the regime. They are instead, if anything, expressions of the permanent ideological contradictions within the Third Reich.

## Notes

1. Thomas Mann, "Gedanken im Kriege," in *Essays*, ed. Herman Kurzke (Frankfurt a.M., 1986), vol. 2, p. 26.

2. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, ed. Hanno Helbling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), pp. 484, 575; "Einkehr" (1917), in *Essays*, vol. 3, p. 38.

3. Carl Schmitt, *Der Wert der Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen* (Tübingen, 1914), pp. 1–5.

4. Max Scheler, "Der Genius des Krieges und der deutsche Krieg," in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Manfred S. Frings (Bern-München, 1982), vol. 4, p. 249.

5. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, pp. 241, 248, 109, 318, 58, 44, 139, 455, 248, 455ff, *passim*.

6. Mann, "Gedanken im Kriege," p. 30.

7. Mann, "Einkehr," p. 38.

8. Schmitt, *Der Wert des Staates und die Bedeutung des Einzelnen*, pp. 4ff.

9. Carl Schmitt, *Politische Romantik* (Berlin, 1968), p. 144.

10. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (München, 1933), pp. 7ff.

11. Oswald Spengler, *Der Mensch und die Technik: Beitrag zu einer Philosophie des Lebens* (München, 1971), p. 2.

12. Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Stuttgart: Bibliothek der Moderne, 1982), p. 49.

13. Ibid., p. 167.

14. Ibid., p. 54.

15. Ibid., pp. 115–17.

16. Ibid., pp. 164ff.

17. Ibid., p. 78.

18. Ibid., pp. 29–31, 66.

19. Ibid., pp. 266, 55, 37.

20. Ibid., pp. 44, 38, 228, 168.

21. Ibid., p. 169.

22. Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 162.

23. Spengler, *Der Mensch und die Technik*, pp. 3–9.

24. Ibid., pp. 57, 3.

25. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, pp. 5ff.

26. Ibid., pp. 77, 26, 79.

27. In Herf, *Reactionary Modernism* p. 162; cf. also chaps. 7, 8.

28. Cf. Jost Hermand, *Der alte Traum vom neuen Reich: Völkische Utopien und Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 266.

29. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1939) pp. 151ff., 255ff.

30. Walter Darré, *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden* (München, 1939), pp. 87, 91; on Darré's figure, cf. Anna Bramwell, *Blood and Soil* (1985).

31. Cf. Hermand, *Der alte Traum*, pp. 259–66.

32. Karl Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," in *Aneignung und Polemik: Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hans Saner (München, 1968), p. 483.

33. Ibid., p. 430.

34. Ibid., p. 432; in *Philosophische Autobiographie* ([München-Zürich, 1984], p. 67), Jaspers will favoringly recall Weber's condemnation of the

"banausic political pettiness of the social democracy, of the trade unions, and of the workers' leaders."

35. Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," p. 475.

36. Ibid., p. 464.

37. Silvio Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik am Nationalsozialismus und an der Technik* (Tübingen, 1989), pp. 12, 17.

38. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, pp. 166, 571.

39. Ibid., p. 193; and Mann, "Einkehr," pp. 38ff.

40. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, pp. 69, 103.

41. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben in Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 50.

42. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt, 1980), p. 31.

43. Ibid., p. 193. Significantly enough, this passage from Heidegger's 1936–37 lecture is left out of the 1961 edition; cf. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Frankfurt a.M., 1961), vol. 1, pp. 182ff.

44. This is a passage from a lecture on Schelling (summer 1936) which was not included in the edition that followed: Martin Heidegger *Schelling: Abhandlung über das Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Tübingen, 1971). Cf. Carl Ulmer's letter to *Der Spiegel* dated May 2, 1977; and Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, eds. Annemarie Gehtmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), pp. 37, 59 n. 11; cf. also Martin Heidegger, "Schelling: vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit" (1936), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 42, pp. 40ff. In these years Nietzsche's thought is so far from being synonymous with nihilism that Jaspers, in his warm praise (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 2) of Heidegger's rectorial speech, compliments Heidegger himself by comparing him to Nietzsche (and very likely, this compliment is greatly appreciated by its recipient).

45. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung im abendländischen Denken," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 44, pp. 200, 188.

46. Martin Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 65, p. 139.

47. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," p. 31.

48. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 41; this passage was already discussed by Vietta in *Heideggers Kritik*, p. 74.

49. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," pp. 139ff.

50. Heidegger, "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," p. 192.

51. Ibid., p. 187.

52. Heidegger, "Nitezsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," p. 191.

53. Ibid., p. 274.

54. Ibid., pp. 278, 283.

55. Ibid., p. 278.

56. Ibid., p. 281.

57. In a letter dated March 30, 1933, in Martin Heidegger and Elisabeth Blochmann, *Briefwechsel 1918–1969*, ed. Joachim W. Storck (Marbach, 1990), p. 60.

58. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 13, 18.

59. Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933–34: Tatsachen und Gedanken," published as an appendix to *Die Selbstbehauptung*, p. 23.

60. The problematic interpretation of Nietzsche made by Jaspers, who is careful to highlight even the contradictory and aporetic aspects of the philosopher, is condemned by Heidegger as a form of psychologistic reductionism, and defined as "the *greatest falsification*": cf. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," p. 278; the text to which this condemnation mostly refers is Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1936). This criticism, however, is guilty of completely overlooking the points in common between the two interpretations of Nietzsche.

61. Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz* (Bremen, 1947), pp. 23, 101.

62. Karl Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, 4th ed. (Basel, 1954), pp. 286, 291.

63. Karl Jaspers, "Nietzsche und das Christentum," in *Aneignung und Polemik*, p. 353.

64. Werner Sombart, *Händler und Helden: Patriotische Gesinnungen* (München-Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1915), p. 53.

65. Frederich Nietzsche, *Der Wanderer und sein Schatten* (1879), af. 218.

66. Jaspers, "Nietzsche und das Christentum," pp. 338ff.

67. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 14ff, 155.

68. Jaspers, "Nietzsche und das Christentum," pp. 338ff; and Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 124.

69. Letter dated August 30, 1933, in Heidegger and Blochmann, *Briefwechsel*, p. 69.

70. Cf. Hermand, *Der alte Traum*, pp. 259–62.

71. Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, pp. 97, 118ff.

72. Ibid., p. 124.

73. Ibid., p. 101.

74. Ibid., pp. 61ff.

75. Martin Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 40, pp. 50ff.

76. Ibid., p. 43.

77. This appeal ("Zwölf Sätze der Studentenschaft") appears in Léon Poliakov and Joseph Wulf, *Das dritte Reich und Seine Denker* (München, 1978), p. 117.

78. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," pp. 55–57.

79. Ibid., p. 12.

80. In Hitler's speech delivered in Potsdam on March 23, 1933, and

printed in Georg Usadel, *Zeitgeschichte in Wort und Bild. Vom Alten Zum Neuen Reich* (Oldenburg-Berlin, 1942), vol. 4, p. 38.

81. See *Borman-Vermerke* (audio recording), vol. 2, p. 304 (Hitler's talk on August 29, 1942).

82. Again, in Hitler's speech delivered in Potsdam and printed in Usadel, *Zeitgeschichte in Wort und Bild*, vol. 4, p. 38.

83. "Adolf Hitlers Geheimrede vor dem 'Militärischen Führernachwuchs' vom 30 Mai 1942," in *Hitlers Tischgespräche*, ed. Henry Picker (Frankfurt a.M.–Berlin, 1989), p. 496.

84. Ibid., pp. 121 (dialogue of March 7, 1942), 364 (dialogue of June 7, 1942).

85. Darré, *Neuadel aus Blut und Boden*, p. 86. As for the presumed meeting between Heidegger and Darré, cf. Bramwell, *Blood and Soil*, p. 117.

86. Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, pp. 498ff.

87. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 121.

88. Ibid., pp. 40ff.

89. See, in particular, Vietta, *Heideggers Kritik*, p. 73.

90. In August 1941 Gen. Franz Halder, who is fighting on the Eastern front, explains the relentless and unforeseen resistance of the USSR with the fact that the latter had carefully prepared for the war "with the usual unscrupulousness typical of a totalitarian State": in Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, eds., *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte: 1939–1942* (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p. 82. In order to refer, instead, to Germany and Italy in a positive way, Hitler prefers to speak of "authoritarian State": cf. *Bormann-Vermerke*, vol. 1, pp. 302ff, and vol. 2, pp. 25ff (dialogues dated February 17, 1942, and March 31, 1942).

91. Paul J. Goebbels, *Wesen und Gestalt des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin, 1934), p. 18.

92. The two texts by E. R. Huber and A. Rosenberg are included in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im "Dritten Reich"* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 77ff. As for the antistate tendencies within Nazism, cf. Domenico Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel* (Milano: Guerinie Associati, 1987), pp. 108–15.

93. Heidegger, "Beiträge zur Philosophie," p. 81.

94. Edmund Burke, "Thoughts on French Affairs" (1791) and "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with Respect to France" (1793), in *The Works: A New Edition* (London, 1826), vol. 7, pp. 9, 179. The category of "total revolution" then becomes the *leitmotif* of Gentz's reprimand against the French Revolution (cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Vincenzo Cuoco, la rivoluzione napoletana del 1799 e la comparatistica delle rivoluzioni," *Società e Storia* 46 [1989]: 895–921). According to Schmitt, it was the French Revolution that created the "total 'human society' ": cf. Carl Schmitt, *Über die drei Arten des rechtswissenschaftlichen Denkens* (Hamburg, 1934), p. 44.

95. Edmund Husserl, "An den Präsidenten des VIII Internationalen Philosophenkongresses Herrn Prof. Dr. Rádl in Prag," in *Aufsätze und Vorträge*

(1922–1937), eds. Thomas Nenon and Hans R. Sepp, *Husserliana*, vol. 27 (Den Haag, 1987), p. 241.

96. Benedetto Croce, "Aspetti morali della vita politica" (1928), in *Etica e politica* (Bari, 1967), p. 235.

97. Carl Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte* (Berlin, 1939), p. 39.

98. Carl Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierung (1939). Zu Christoph Steding 'Das Reich unol die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur,' " in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles 1929–1939* (Hamburg, 1940), p. 286.

99. Otto F. Bollnow, "Zum Begriff der Ganzheit bei Othmar Spann," *Finanzarchiv: Neue Folge* 6, no. 2 (1938):303–306.

100. Carl Schmitt, "Staatsethik und pluralistischer Staat" (1930), in *Positionen und Begriffe*, p. 143.

101. Franz Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* (Leipzig, 1939), pp. 43, 87, 89. Analogously, in Italy, Amerigo Ruggiero denounces "the totalitarian industrialization of Russia," engaged in a furious "americanization": cf. Michela Nacci, *L'antiamericanismo in Italia negli anni trenta* (Torino, 1989), p. 134.

102. Ibid., p. 93.

103. Ibid., p. 99.

104. Ibid., pp. 85–87.

105. Ibid., p. 106.

106. Ibid., p. 64.

107. Ibid., pp. 55ff.

108. Ibid., pp. 106–108.

109. Ibid., pp. 80, 93.

110. Ibid., p. 164.

111. Ibid., pp. 121, 126.

*S I X*

# THE DECLINE AND TRANSFIGURATION OF THE WEST

## 1. CRITICISM OF THE IDEAL OF PERPETUAL PEACE

We have already noted the enthusiasm of German intellectuals brought on by the outbreak of the war. Even after Germany's defeat, together with the other topoi characteristic of the *Kriegsideologie*, a position that derides the ideal of eternal peace remains quite prominent. Thomas Mann writes in *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*: "The peaceful and tranquil community of peoples is a chimera. Eternal peace would be possible only within the confusion and amalgamation of races and peoples, something which, thanks or no thanks to God, is still far from happening." In reality, war is "immortal," and so it makes no sense to describe it as a "slaughterhouse" to which the world's peoples are led like unruly sacrificial "lambs." The truth is that man does not perceive peace as an "unconditional ideal; without a doubt there lives within him an immortal, primitive-heroic element, a profound need for horrid experiences."[1] The self-criticism with which Thomas Mann later distances himself from this position is scornfully rejected by a good part of German culture, and this rejection is essential to understanding the anti-democratic pathos and compromising involvement with Nazism on the part of leading intellectuals.

There is no hope (or illusion) for a lasting, if not eternal, peace, not after such a tremendous massacre.

> Peace is a desire, war is a fact, and the history of man has never given consideration to human desires and ideals. Life is struggle. . . . The fact that entire populations become pacifistic is a symptom of senile weakness: gone are the young, strong races. The ideal of pacifism signifies the ultimate contradiction to the facts of life, it is a renunciation of the future.

So states Spengler in 1936.[2] More than just unachievable, the ideal of peace, or eternal peace, is judged ignoble and, "from a historical point of view, rubbish [*Abfall*]"; in the final analysis, it is none other than the ideal of "*panem et circenses.*"[3]

We were able to verify (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 1) the presence of some of these themes even in authors such as Jaspers, though in a less militant and more "existential" form. It is now worth considering whether, and to what extent, the Nazi rise to power modifies Jaspers's position with regards to the ideal of eternal peace. Actually, even as late as 1935, the spiritual transfiguration of war, a classic theme of the *Kriegsideologie*, is still very much present:

> The greatest clarity and truth may come about even in the form of a combative enmity, when existences originally different in essence consciously face, in the struggle for *Dasein* [*Daseinskampf*], the destiny from which no escape is possible.

Of course, the battle must be carried out in such a way so as not to preclude "subsequent, authentic communication"; it must respect the rules, and therefore be conducted in a "chivalrous" manner:

> But if this occurs, then the first step to authentic communication has already been taken; given these conditions, the battle would no longer be a mere unfolding of *Dasein*'s necessity [*Daseinsnotwendigkeiten*], but a sort of game, a game loaded with destiny, one, perhaps, which even threatens life with extinction.[4]

The clash between diverse historicities is beneficial and necessary: each expresses an autonomous system of values that is worthy of respect; but only the "sophistry of convenient tolerance" would allow for the belief that these two distinct divinities can and must live in disregard for one another, and thus without establishing a relationship based upon contrast and battle. In reality, different truths become "untrue when they are side by side in indifference."[5] Weber had already affirmed that

"what is divine is merely suggested" in different value systems, and this is not enough to eliminate their "eternal contention."[6] Jaspers fervently underscores the conflictual dimension of such a polytheism of values. It is a category that Heidegger condemns to the extent that it is synonymous with liberalism, and one that Jaspers on the other hand exalts, but only after having previously liberated it of any trace of what might be interpreted as liberal; that is, that which he decisively rejects as the "sophistry of convenient tolerance."

At this point, then, we may definitively conclude that when Jaspers claims to have begun hoping, as early as 1933 or 1934, for a Western military intervention against Hitler's dictatorship, he is clearly backdating the beginning of his opposition to the regime. Jaspers observes that already then "everyone, including Heidegger, knew that eventually there would be war."[7] And yet, in 1936, Jaspers argues (indirectly, of course, as the argument is attributed to Nietzsche) against "that pacifistic philosophy which wants to impose peace by means of a more powerful army, that is, through violence [this actually confutes the idea of a military intervention intent upon smothering the Third Reich's hotbed of war], or that would achieve peace by means of a gradual disarmament." Though he is worlds away from the bellicose militancy of Spengler, Jaspers seems to share the belief, ascribed to Nietzsche, that war is inevitable "if man does not want to be deprived of his possibilities."[8] A state of perpetual peace continues to be seen as the dangerous hotbed of a banausic infection. In 1938, Otto Friedrich Bollnow affirms that "only through conflict with others is each *Dasein* (and each spiritual idea) able to conquer and defend the vital space [*Lebensraum*] in which it survives and develops." He exalts the Nietzschean invitation to "live dangerously" ("the restlessness and dangerousness of *Dasein*" is itself the supposition of "human greatness and productivity"). In doing this, Bollnow cites not only the regime's ideologists, Baeumler and Heyse, but even Jaspers (and his interpretation of "conflict" as a "borderline situation").[9] Of course, Bollnow's assertions are not necessarily those of Jaspers, but it is clear that the latter's philosophy, at least at this time, hardly induces pacifism.

The ideal of a lasting, if not eternal, peace, is even more foreign to Heidegger, who scornfully rejects it.[10] Even in his declaration of support for Germany's decision to withdraw from the League of Nations, Heidegger is ironic with regard to the ideal of an "inconsistent and uncommitted universal brotherhood" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 4). And as rector of the University of Freiburg he requests that administrative action be taken

against a staff member accused of being a pacifist during the First World War.[11] In addition, in his *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, he proposes a radical philosophical renovation of Germany and the West in order to create a solid basis for the "resoluteness and boldness of the sword" (cf. *supra*, chap. 5, § 3). One should also keep in mind the great interest in Heidegger that is stirred up by Ernst Jünger who, not by chance, is hailed by the extreme right-wing press as the "anti-Remarque."[12] Finally, in 1940, Heidegger dismisses "pacifism and eternal peace" as forms of secularized Christianity and incomplete nihilism,[13] rightly destined to be swept away by absolute nihilism. In 1935, Huizinga notes that German culture is drenched in the celebration of war. If this is in direct reference to Spengler, Schmitt, and Freyer, then the observation certainly has a more general significance.[14]

At the time of the *Machtergreifung*, Spengler writes:

> We are perhaps already on the eve of the second world war—alliances are uncertain, and no one foresees the means and tactics: military, economic and revolutionary. . . . The first world war was nothing more than the thunder and lightning of those dark clouds which traverse our century laden with destiny. The world will again be re-shaped in the form of the early *Imperium Romanum*.[15]

At this time, war in the West is anything but excluded, though three years later, Spengler, rejecting the ideal of perpetual peace as a symptom of vital decadence, observes: "Contemporary communism names its wars revolts." The difference is strictly verbal: to profess revolutionary faith is nonetheless a bellicose declaration. "It is a dangerous fact—Spengler continues—that today only white populations speak of world peace, not the colored ones, which are numerically much more powerful." The West is in mortal danger (keep in mind that for Spengler, communist Russia is among the colored populations): "Pacifism will remain an ideal, war will remain a fact, and if the white populations have decided not to take charge of the war, the colored ones will, and they will come to dominate the world."[16] The West is called upon to recover its warlike spirit, above all with regard to the East.

## 2. Blitzkrieg, New Order, and Absolute Nihilism

But the war, perhaps expected more in the East, erupts instead in the West (against France and Britain, the allies of a quickly defeated Poland). It is not the "historical" war foreseen by Jaspers in 1931. In 1953, he will describe the atmosphere at the start of the conflict as such: "Apart from some inconspicuous exceptions, Germans, even old friends, were hoping for a German victory; while I, in the midst of this exultation, searched desperately for a sign that things would change."[17] It is impossible to say whether or not, here too, Jaspers backdates, if not his sentiments, then at least their clarity. What is certain is that, among his "old friends" unhesitantly supporting Germany, Heidegger is undoubtedly included. One might venture to ask, however, whether or not Heidegger was embarrassed by the unforeseen manner of the conflict. The First World War—he states during the course of his 1936–37 lectures—had demonstrated the validity of Nietzsche's thesis regarding the death of God, the moral God of the Christian tradition: both sides of the opposing "Christian" powers "called upon the same 'good God' to fight for them, even up to the very end."[18] Did the new conflict not confirm the decisive victory of Nihilism in the West? Nazi Germany, rising to defend the West, allies itself with Japan and signs a nonaggression pact with Bolshevik Russia: it is a point that Thomas Mann does not fail to ironically comment upon in one of his radio transmissions before a hypothetical, or at least very small, German audience.[19] And didn't Heidegger himself, in 1935, warn Europe, locked between the United States and the USSR, not to stab itself in the back?

According to Heidegger, what sparks the conflict is the will to power that traverses Western history, while a secondary role is played by economic factors, to include the "increase in population." Not even the search for *Lebensraum*, to which official German propaganda makes reference, provides an adequate explanation. Not that Heidegger supports the accusations made against the Third Reich and its expansionist policies; to the contrary, he is quick to reject them: "When the execution of this metaphysical will [to power] is interpreted as a 'product' of egoism or of the will of 'dictators' and 'authoritarian states,' what is being voiced is nothing more than political calculation and propaganda, or the metaphysical ignorance of a philosophy which for centuries has been trapped in a blind alley, or both of these things."[20] Indeed, "securing 'vital space'

for the living is never the end goal, but rather the means to increase power; and with this augmented power comes the increased need for space." The insatiable nature of Nazi expansionism is very precisely described, and its aggressive character is readily perceptible; but this assertion is by no means critical, which again confirms that it is "a fundamental metaphysical law of power itself," and therefore appointed governments and politico-social regimes cannot be held responsible.[21] Yes, this relentless will to power is nihilism, but, as we shall soon see, any attempt to criticize it on moral or juridical grounds is incomplete nihilism, and for that reason, even worse.

It is in this same period that Thomas Mann juxtaposes the German "policy of power" to the "humanity," that is, to the "values and goods of the soul," that he sees embodied in Britain.[22] Faced with the new international situation, and with the terrible threat that Nazi Germany holds over Europe and the world, Mann now wholeheartedly supports the very ascertainment that he had previously dismissed, in his *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, as the Entente powers' hypocritical propaganda. Heidegger, instead, perceives Germany's enemies in the Second World War as driven by the same will to power that they insist on ascribing solely to the Third Reich. In order to demonstrate his point, he provides a significant example. Immediately after France's defeat and the signing of the armistice, Britain proceeds to destroy her former ally's fleet in an attempt to prevent it from falling into German hands. Instead, this strengthens Germany's military and maritime power. Heidegger's comment is as follows:

> When, for example, the British recently bombed and sank French navy vessels docked at Oran, it was thoroughly "justified" from *their* point of view: indeed, "justified" is that which serves to augment power. At the same time, in no way is it possible or permissible for *us* to justify their actions; every power, metaphysically considered, has its own law [*Recht*], and only through impotency does it become illegal [*Unrecht*]. And still, it is a metaphysical tactic on the part of all powers to never regard the adversary's actions in relation to their point of view, but rather according to a universal human morality, which, however, has mere propaganda value only.[23]

Offered in explanation of the genesis and significance of the conflict, and in determination of its progress, is Nietzsche's ideal of *Gerechtigkeit*: the "justice" of the most powerful, at that moment undoubtedly—or so

it seems—Germany. The identification with Germany is quite clear, as is evident by the "us" cited above.

One argument, however, is not addressed: If, in the war now taking place, nothing more is at stake than the will to power, which has nihilistically eliminated any other possible explanation, why take sides with one power or the other? Here, Heidegger makes an important distinction:

> The Nietzschean concept of nihilism is not at all "negative"; what is negative is incomplete and passive nihilism, that arid aspiration to substitute the current values with similar ones of a weaker nature; for example, the substitution of the ideals of "socialism" and "universal happiness" for "Christianity." . . . When Nietzsche repeatedly defines himself as a "nihilist," it is not ruin, annihilation and decline that he has in mind; instead he considers nihilism something *positive* and *directed towards the future*.[24]

In the case of socialism and democracy, on the other hand,

> the definitive removal of the values in force is slowed down. Nihilism remains incomplete; in order to become absolute it must traverse the extreme. *Extreme nihilism* recognizes the fact that there is no eternal truth in and of itself, that truth must always be reconquered and put into place. To this end, extreme nihilism develops as an active nihilism; the latter does not allow what exists to simply fall little by little into ruin by limiting itself to the role of the spectator. Instead, it directly intervenes to overthrow it.[25]

In this sense, nihilism "is not just collapse [*Einsturz*], but annihilation [*Wegfall*] in the form of liberation, and thus a new beginning [*Beginn*]."[26]

Active nihilism, with which Heidegger clearly identifies at this time, is represented by Nazism, and Nazism is driven by a lucid will to power, and by the dazzling victories through which it is realizing the "new order." Again and again the call for a *Neue Ordnung* is repeated in the course of the second lecture in 1940. And there is no possible ambiguity: the reference is to what Thomas Mann, during the course of the war, defines as "Hitler's infamous 'new order.' "[27] Naturally, Heidegger is convinced otherwise. The unscrupulous brutality with which the Third Reich is actualizing the *Neue Ordnung* is philosophically described and transfigured as absolute and active nihilism; it has nothing to do with decadence since it accelerates the decrepitation of values that have already become moldy and lack credibility. "The double negation of that

which exists and that which must be," of every normative horizon, is in fact the presupposition of the "new order. Only an [absolute] nihilist is able to actualize it."[28] In short, "Nietzsche demands that the coming of nihilism be looked upon as the introduction of an absolute return and a new beginning, unhindered by half-measures, rather than as the means of spreading the belief in the 'decline of the West.' "[29] The "beginning" (*Anfang*) does not exactly presuppose the transcendence of the metaphysics of the will to power; rather, only the *neuer Beginn* extends the "*unconditional dominion of nihilism.*"[30] But it is this extension that in turn renders the "new beginning" possible.

The denunciation of nihilism, which traverses the history of the West, is not at all indifferent: "[A]n awareness [*Besinnung*] of nihilism cannot mean a mere historiographic consideration of the present era and its historical presuppositions; rather, it is, in and of itself, necessarily, a decision regarding what must constitute Earth's humanity [*Menschentum*] in the future."[31] "Nihilism and nihilism are not the same thing."[32] Thus Heidegger follows the events of the war, attempting to interpret the Third Reich's dazzling victories philosophically. They represent the victory of absolute and active nihilism over incomplete nihilism. There is nothing arbitrary about France's terrible defeat; instead, it answers to some "mysterious law of history": the country that gave birth to Descartes is defeated by a country that, thanks to the triumph of absolute nihilism, excels in the organization of an "economy of the machine." Springing to victory is "a new humanity [*neues Menschentum*] . . . which transcends the modern man." In fact, "only the overman is commensurate to the absolute 'economy of the machine,' and vice versa: they depend upon each other in order to establish absolute dominion over the Earth."[33]

At this time, Heidegger's position does not stray far from Jünger's in *Der Arbeiter*, the work in which, in this very same time period, Heidegger comments upon and discusses with a "small circle of university professors."[34] According to Jünger, "a new world order [is] the result of world domination," which in turn will be the result of an enormous armed conflict marked by the will to power:

> The legitimate version of the many manifestations of the will to power which desire to rule needs to be made clear. Qualification of its legitimacy consists in the rule over the predominant elements, in knowing how to dominate absolute movement, and this can only be the work of a new humanity. We believe that such a humanity already exists at this moment.[35]

The genuine existence and superiority of the *neues Menschentum* foreseen by Jünger is demonstrated by the invincibility of the Third Reich's war machine.

Admiration for the war machine's efficiency at the beginning of the war is evident in Heidegger. Making clear reference to the occupation of Scandinavia in one of his first lectures of the second trimester in 1940, he observes:

> When, in order to capture the intrepid images of airborne troops jumping from planes, an additional airplane is called in to film the paratroopers, there is nothing "sensational" or "curious" about it; the diffusion of these images, the awareness and vision of these events is, in and of itself, part of the event, and of armament. Such "film reportage" is a metaphysical process and is not dependent upon the judgement of daily portrayal.[36]

The theme is taken up again at the end of the course, in an evaluation of the German victories that have culminated with the invasion of France: "From the perspective of 'spirituality' and bourgeois culture, one tends to consider the complete 'motorization' of the *Wehrmacht*, from top to bottom, as boundless 'technicalism' and materialism. But it is really a metaphysical act. . . ."[37] Heidegger goes to great lengths to remove any suspicion that the efficiency of the German war machine may be accompanied by "materialism" and even "technicalism." Germany's victory is metaphysically necessary: in the West, one historical period has ended, and another is about to begin. Metaphysics as the will to power, after reaching its extreme, is about to undo itself in its overcoming.

One might say that with the victory of absolute nihilism in the Second World War, the situation characteristic of the First World War is reversed. How is Germany's defeat in 1918 explained? By way of an appeal for "democracy," "progress," and "self-determination," Western democracies develop the means to mobilize in a manner far superior to that of the central powers, this according to Jünger.[38] The victory of the ideology of progress was, however, the victory of the "the great Church of the nineteenth century"; or, in Heidegger's words, the victory of incomplete nihilism. Only by stirring up the ideals, or rather the propaganda, characteristic of the slogans for democracy and progress, were France and Britain able to take charge of that decisive, fideistic (*glaubensmäßig*) component: total mobilization. They were able to pass the war off as a "crusade of reason," and to pass their soldiers off as "humanity's war-

riors."[39] But the victory of Germany's enemies is not destined to last for long: the war questions the ideology of progress upon which the Entente powers are founded. It triggers the "dismantling of the people's Church of the nineteenth century"; the central powers, and the traditional values that they stand for, are swept away by the *Bürger*, "mobilized" in the name of democracy. But this *Bürger*, tied to the world of "security," is itself destined to be swept away by the *Arbeiter-Soldat*, the worker-soldier who, unhindered by false ideals and lies, easily navigates the rediscovered world of danger, the "elementary," and the will to power. The forces that the war set in motion are destined to put an end to the "deceptive victory" (*Scheinsieg*) of the "bourgeoisie" and democratic civilization, as well as the "deceptive [*Scheinkultus*] faith in progress."[40]

The Third Reich's dazzling victories at the beginning of the war seem to clearly confirm Jünger's theory, and according to Heidegger, the period from 1939 to 1940 marks the irreversible defeat of incomplete nihilism. This schema is reiterated in the summer of 1941, during the course of which Heidegger makes a direct reference to Jünger when he states that the new "humanity" enlisted to realize the Nietzschean will to power is represented by "the 'workers' and the 'soldiers.' " It is they "who have now determined the face of reality."[41]

## 3. *IMPERIUM*, THE REICH, AND ANCIENT HELLENISM

We can now assess the change in Heidegger's evaluation of Nietzsche with respect to the years prior to the conflict. Nietzsche is further distanced from the authentic new "beginning" (*Anfang*); and the path that leads to the transcendence of nihilism becomes more problematic. The Third Reich's foreign policy now falls under the same category as nihilism, both absolute and classic. As with Nietzsche's philosophy, the "new order," brought about by Germany's victories and her unrestrained will to power, must also be understood as both the end and the "new beginning" (*neuer Beginn*), which in turn is the first step to the authentic new "beginning." In this sense, absolute nihilism is not completely synonymous with the will to power (and Nazism). Both accelerate and confirm the end of one historical period by eliminating the half-measures of incomplete nihilism, hypocritical and ignorant of itself (democracy, socialism, and so on), and pave the way for the new begin-

ning. But by themselves, active nihilism and the will to power, and thus Nietzsche, are not the new beginning per se. Instead—Heidegger declares at the apex of Nazi military might—"the metaphysics of the will to power goes hand in hand with that which is Romanic and with Machiavelli's *The Prince*."[42] To steadfastly support this point of view is to preclude any new Greco-German beginning. When the United States enters the war, Heidegger states that Romanic nature continues to live on in Americanism: the two share a "monumentality" that is extraneous to German authenticity (*undeutsches Monumentales*).[43]

The decision to reject Nietzsche's "Romanity" is emphasized later in the course of the war. Instead, the representative of authentic Hellenism and thus the possible *Überwindung* of modern metaphysics, is Hölderlin, who is under no circumstances to be confused with Nietzsche; the two are worlds apart.[44] In an introduction to his lecture on Aristotle in 1931, Heidegger cites a passage from *Der Wille zur Macht* in which Nietzsche exalts "German pride in having re-established a link which had long seemed broken: the link with the Greeks, the greatest 'men' to have ever appeared."[45] It is the same text that, some years later, Baeumler cites in order to demonstrate the ties between Hellas and Germany.[46] But for the Heidegger who expounds the victories of the Third Reich, the Hellenism that Nietzsche claims to have discovered is in reality "absolutely Roman, and at the same time modern, and thus not Greek": "Roman" here is synonymous with "imperial."[47] In the final analysis, Nietzsche's will to power is criticized as imperial and Roman.

We might ask ourselves if Heidegger hasn't distanced himself from the Nazi regime. Didn't Hitler love to play the role, at least privately, of the reborn Roman emperor?[48] And wasn't the very same Nietzsche whom Heidegger condemns as Roman and imperial presented by a large political press as the precursor to the Third Reich? Regarding this last point, it is worth noting that the representation of Nazi ideologists as unequivocal followers of Nietzsche is erroneous. Even in this circle there are differences of opinion, even some contradictions.[49] If, on the one hand, Heidegger is in disagreement with the *Nietzsche-Bewegung* (the Third Reich's predominant movement) and, in particular, with Baeumler, who sees in Nietzsche the symbol of Hellenism struggling against the modern world's Romanity; on the other hand, they both have a negative opinion of all that is Roman and modern. For Baeumler, what is Roman is analogous to an international order that eliminates national peculiarities. It is not only synonymous with cosmopolitanism and impe-

rialism, but also with a philistine vision of the world as opposed to the agonistic spirit of the Greeks: pax romana and imperium romanum are clearly perceived in a negative way.[50] These themes, despite notable differences, can be found in other Nazi ideologists as well, such as Heyse[51] and Böhm. Böhm contrasts "two thousand years of 'universalism' " in the West to what is exalted as "original Hellenism" with a *Völkisch* reinterpretation; that is, to the "Greek stateliness with its popular foundation" that is lost with the coming of Aristotle, and even more so with the coming of the "Roman empire" and the modern world.[52]

It would be rash to assert that Heidegger's criticism of Nietzsche's will to power as being "Roman" and "imperial," is in fact a subtle criticism of German imperialism. Carl Schmitt, who denounces the "imperialism of Versailles,"[53] contrasts the *Reich* to *Imperium* as such: the latter, beginning with the Romans, is said to have a tendentially universalistic meaning, and so does anything but respect the uniqueness of distinct peoples (*Imperium* is the term most suitable then for "Western democratic empires" and the "Eastern universalism of the Bolsheviks, intent upon world revolution"); on the other hand, the German *Reich* has an "ethnic" (*volkhaft*) foundation, and implies "a juridical order essentially non-universalistic in nature, one which respects every population."[54] It is 1939, right after the *Anschluß* and the subsequent dismemberment of Czechoslovakia: "The center of Europe [*die Mitte*] has gone from being weak and impotent to strong and invulnerable." It is capable of spreading its "great political policy," which "respects each unique population according to its lineage (*Art*), origin, blood and soil," "throughout Central and Southern Europe," and of defending it from any external aggressor.[55] In effect, the Third Reich's expansionism is carried out under the banner of slogans such as "great space" and "vital space," the reordering and unification of "Mitteleuropa," even expressions such as "anti-imperialistic"—all of which reclaim "Europe for Europeans." It is a sort of European Monroe Doctrine, but with Germany obviously playing the role of the guide.[56] When Heidegger speaks of imperialism, he either refers explicitly to England,[57] or indirectly to America, which is identified with Romanity, and thus *Imperium*. *Reich*, on the other hand, has a positive connotation.[58]

Once again, the influence of the *Kriegsideologie* is evident. Not by chance does it recall the *Befreiungskriege*[59] against Napoleon's France, which Fichte and the cultural and political press of the time denounce as expansionist Rome.[60] This anti-Roman topos is very much present in

Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*: here, the war of 1914–18 is interpreted as the apogee of "the Roman world's battle with stubborn Germany." Not only does Mann continually refer to the "Roman West" as being opposed to Germany, but he explicitly states that it now extends to "the other side of the ocean, where a new Capitol has been established."[61] To Rome, he sometimes opposes the ancient Germans, other times Greece. However, there is no contradiction in this because, as Ulrich Wilamowitz states, "only those who belong to the Germanic 'race' truly comprehend the best part of the Greek spirit."[62] An analogous theory is to be found in Heidegger, in 1934, for whom the same "ethnic lineage" (*Stammesart*) is said to unite the Greeks and the Germans,[63] the latter of whom can consider themselves the inheritors of the Greek tradition.

It is true that Spengler, with the military's spectacular victories, envisions the new Rome in the heart of a victorious Germany called to erect a new world empire. In this case, Greece's role, or more precisely that of Athens, is played by France, which is destined to be dismembered and essentially incorporated within Germany. In turn, Germany is to triumphantly end the war, or a series of wars, at Zama, a Zama that is no longer located in Africa, but in England.[64] The analogy that Spengler makes between the age in which he lives, and the age that witnesses the irresistible rise of the Roman empire, stimulates, even demands, that he establish an analogy between "Imperium Romanum" and "the future 'Imperium Germanicum,' "[65] between Prussians and Romans.[66] Likewise, in 1933 Spengler calls for Germany to bring about the "Imperium mundi."[67]

This situation reveals a clash between the "Greek option" and the "Roman option,"[68] though during the Third Reich the former clearly prevails. Rosenberg's interpretation may allow for a better understanding of the hierarchy in which the Greek and the Romanic are generally situated within the realm of Nazi ideology. On the one hand, classical antiquity, in all of its complexity, is exalted vehemently in opposition to the modern world, Asian peoples, and to "Semitic-Judaic" populations. Given this, the Roman Empire is perpetually honored for having destroyed Carthage, and then—later, shamefully later—Jerusalem; so, it is credited with having opposed the "radically proletarian-nihilistic *political* current" evident in Christianity.[69] As for the comparison to Greece, however, it is clear that "the Nordic dream of humanity was dreamt up most beautifully in the Hellenic world," with respect to which, "the a-racial imperialism of Rome" marks a significant degeneration.[70] The

"Greek option" is not even threatened by an alliance with "romanizing" Italian fascism. Heyse, for example, writes in 1935: "Romanic peoples, and fascism, recall Romanity. *The historical roots, that is, the foundation* of our existence, go deeper," they recall "Hellenism." To demonstrate his point, Heyse cites "Hitler's words to the German people: 'The battle which rages today is for extraordinarily important objectives; a culture is fighting for its existence, an existence that encompasses millennia and weaves together the Greek and the German.' "[71] Therefore, the posture that Hitler assumes privately, that of the reborn Roman Emperor, should not be overemphasized. After all, it does not stop him from passionately referring to the Befreiungskriege[72] (seen as a war against the expansion of the "new Romans") and from exalting the supposed Greco-Nordic race, Athens and ancient Greece.[73]

In any case, during the course of the Second World War reference to the Greeks is so diffuse, even in academic circles, that Heidegger is compelled to make this ironic clarification:

> Most "research results" seem to indicate that the Greeks were National Socialists. This erudite zeal does not seem to realize that such conclusions do no service to National Socialism or its historical uniqueness; indeed, National Socialism has no need of such service.[74]

Despite his appeal for restraint, Heidegger too continues to insist upon the parallel between Germany and Greece; this is in synchrony with official propaganda, and in continuity with the topos of the First World War. A continuity that is noted by Horkheimer and Adorno who, influenced by Wilamowitz, in 1944 denounce the "permeation of barbarism and culture in Germany . . . which are the basis of philhellenism."[75]

## 4. HEIDEGGER AND SPENGLER: *KULTUR* AND *ZIVILISATION*

Despite appearances, Spengler and Heidegger are not so far apart. Even more interesting than Spengler's identification of Prussia and Germany with imperial Rome, is his characterization of the latter: "Let's not forget that the *Imperium Romanum* was no more than a ruthless business affair, and that the great Romans were none other than investors"; "Roman expansionism was merely a financial takeover, just slightly disguised in militaristic terms." On the other hand, contemporary Germany, in her

conquest for empire, is following Rome's footsteps; it is—writes Spengler in 1915—"a second America."[76] Despite a central difference, one that we shall address shortly, we seem to find the Heideggerian equation: Rome = ruthless will to power = modernity. For Spengler, too, authentic *Kultur* is represented by Greece, while Rome is synonymous with *Zivilisation*.[77] In this light, from the point of view of the philosophy of history, Spengler himself is in favor of the "Greek option"; though, by virtue of the "contemporaneity" established between his own time and that of imperial Rome, he readily encourages Germany to engage in a policy that is clearly, brutally imperialistic and unimpeded by ideal scruples that are out-of-date. Thomas Mann rightly observes that, despite the reverential bows to *Kultur*, Spengler really sides with *Zivilisation*:[78] Only those who brutally take into account the latter's rules can hope to withstand the implacable logic of things. On the concrete political playing ground, there are no alternatives to the "Roman option."

A similar dialectic is evident in the Heidegger of 1939–40: The prospect of overcoming nihilism remains valid, but in the meantime only absolute nihilism can dictate law. And so, at this stage, as far as the immediate political program is concerned, Heidegger can see no alternative to the "Roman option." The triumph of absolute nihilism is also the triumph of the machine and of Germany. This is Spengler's conclusion as well: "It was the Germanic peoples, not the Romanic peoples of Western Europe and America, who first developed the steam engine, and consequently the great industry which has changed the faces of countries." Given that the preface to the first volume of *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, from which the above citation is taken,[79] is dated 1917, it might be inferred that Spengler's evaluation of the victories of the First World War (there was still hope for victory), is similar to the one given by Heidegger with regard to the initial victories of the Third Reich. In no case does the triumph of the German war machine come to represent the recovery of *Kultur*, or the transcendence of nihilism; and yet in both cases this triumph is warmly welcomed.

However, there is a major difference between Spengler and Heidegger. Spengler sees an insurmountable barrier between *Zivilisation* and new *Kultur*, in the sense that the latter is projected into a remote and improbable future. For a long, or perhaps very long, historical period, there is room only for the ruthless expansion of imperialism and for the will to power. Roman *Zivilisation* lasted for centuries, and might well have lasted even longer:

> It was by pure chance that the Germanic peoples, under pressure from the Huns, came to occupy the Romanic landscape, thus interrupting the develpment of the final "Chinese " stage of classical antiquity. . . . As such, classical antiquity is the only example of a *Zivilisation* interrupted at the apogee of its maturity.[80]

Removed as it is from even the most remote reference to the present, *Kultur* (and thus the "Greek option") is never taken seriously by Spengler. Certainly, "imperialism is pure *Zivilisation*," yet it defines "the irrevocable destiny of the West," present and future. It is a sign, a unique sign, of the "future of Germany."[81] "The authentic mission of the Germans, as the last nation of the West," consists in realizing *Zivilisation*,[82] and thus in imperialistic expansion.

In contrast, Heidegger takes the "Greek option" seriously, extremely seriously. It is for precisely this reason that, paradoxically, his platform is much more appropriate and functional than Spengler's with regard to the justification and transfiguration of Germany's role in Europe and in the world. It is significant that, in 1933 (the same year as the *Machtergreifung*), while Heidegger gives his rectorial speech on the *Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität*, lined with Hellenistic images and etchings, Spengler, on the other hand, is attacked by a Nazi author for shamelessly exalting violence and war, and for having no ideological substance whatsoever.[83] And in effect, *Jahre der Entscheidung* does not hesitate to criticize even the projects of the "*Sacrum Imperium*" and the "Third Reich" as "empty ideals" (*Wunschbilder*) or "castles in the air" (*Luftschlösser*).[84] The only things that seem to count for Spengler are the will to power and the technology at its service: "art, yes, but that of concrete and steel";[85] and the same is true, obviously, for philosophy. There is not even room for the ideology of *Blut und Boden* here. *Zivilisation* is defined precisely by the predominance of the city over the "soil" (*Boden*), a city that has become "rootless."[86] "That which is developing throughout the world is hardness, Roman hardness."[87]

For Heidegger, on the other hand, even though for the moment things are taking place under the banner of absolute nihilism and the Roman will to power, the victories of the Third Reich nonetheless have another significance: the dominion that the Reich now exercises is not merely the conclusion of a cycle; rather it can and must, at the same time, be the premise of a new beginning. Germany must recover authentic Hellenism, break with the modern world (symbolized by Romanity and the will to power), and initiate a new phase in Western history. Spengler con-

siders Germany's Romanic imperialism and expansionism beneficial, but nonetheless an exclusive element of *Zivilisation* and "the decline of the West": It is an image that instills very little enthusiasm; instead—as we've seen—it is accused of a "pessimism" unsilenced by the mere substitution of the word "decline" (*Untergang*) for that of "fulfillment" (*Vollendung*).[88] Spengler differs most from Heidegger with regard to this point. According to Heidegger, even if it is not an *Anfang*, that is, a recovery of ancient Hellenism, the victory of absolute nihilism is still a *Neuer Beginn* that, far from being separate from the *Anfang* (as far apart as *Kultur* and *Zivilisation* are for Spengler), it constitutes its necessary premise.

On the other hand, because Heidegger takes the "Greek option" so very seriously, he cannot fully identify with the "Roman option," that is, with the ideology through which he nonetheless justifies and transfigures Germany's initial spectacular victories. The Romanic will to power cannot be the last word spoken between Western peoples, not if they want to recover their authentic, original significance. The pathos of Hellenism in some way involves the pathos of Western unity, a problem perceived more by Heidegger than by Spengler. Spengler, as much as he rails about the dangers represented by the "colored peoples" (to include the Soviet Union), is unable to imagine a union, even among "whites." These days—Spengler declares, referring to Nietzsche—there is no room for "nebulous ideals" (*weltfremde Ideale*): If Germany does not want to "cease being a population," she must wake up;[89] her mission is simply that of imposing her will to power, thus bringing *Zivilisation* to its fulfillment.

The mission that Heidegger ascribes to Germany is incomparably more elevated. The Nietzschean or Roman will to power is merely one stop along the road to the renovation and reunification that Germany will bring about in the West. Perhaps beneath the sometimes scathing criticism of the Roman will to power, perhaps also beneath Heidegger's "Greek" option, ultimately there lies a "Western option" for those who are unsettled by the conflict raging in the West's own backyard. Heidegger, we noted, "metaphysically" justifies Germany's victories in 1940, but such justifications are voiced less and less, among other things, because of the war's development. Nietzschean *Gerechtigkeit*, held to be the "basis of the will to power," had resolved the conflict with France and England in Germany's favor. At least in 1940. But in the winter of 1942–43 there is an insistence that this *Gerechtigkeit* is a Roman principle which confirms the loss of original Hellenism and the ruinous decline of the West.[90]

The diverse configuration of the bitter polemic against Spengler, the

representative of the "Roman option," may not be by chance. In 1940, Spengler is contrasted to Nietzsche. Let's consider a passage cited earlier: "Nietzsche demands that the coming of nihilism be looked upon as the introduction of an absolute return and a new beginning, unhindered by half-measures, rather than as the means of spreading the belief in the 'decline of the West.' "[91] Unlike Spengler, Nietzsche can distinguish between absolute nihilism and incomplete nihilism.[92] This, at the time of Germany's triumph in the west. Stalingrad casts a shadow upon this winter semester, and so, according to Heidegger, Spengler is wrong to rely "solely upon the metaphysics of Nietzsche," that is, upon the will to power.[93] In 1940, Spengler is also condemned for being, unlike Nietzsche (and Jünger), unable to provide the conceptual means for the metaphysical justification of Germany's victory. Spengler is condemned again in 1942–43 as the embodiment of the will to power and, in the final analysis, of the Roman option that held such tragic consequences for the West. As the distinction between absolute and incomplete nihilism becomes less apparent during the course of the war, conversely the overall condemnation of the will to power (Nietzsche's and Spengler's), regarded as the expression of the nihilistic oblivion of being, emerges. After the war heads east, for Heidegger, the real issue becomes being (and thus Greco-German and Greco-Western "historicity").

With the loss of all hope in the illusion of absolute nihilism's Blitzkrieg, unease with the war to the west converges with an increasing impatience regarding "cranial measurement"[94] and biological racism which, giving patriotism and nationalism a naturalistic hue, make German self-awareness of her Greek inheritance, as well as her position as the vanguard of the West, impossible. This is why some of those who attend Heidegger's lectures toward the end of the war have the impression that he is breaking with the regime,[95] despite the fact that up until the very end he truly identifies with Germany's lot in the war.

## 5. THE DEFENSE OF "HISTORICITY" AND THE REINTERPRETATION OF THE WAR

With the extension of the conflict beyond the "West" (as it is circumscribed by Heidegger), interpretation of the war once again takes on the pathos of European and Western "historicity" characteristic of his texts from 1933 through to the outbreak of the conflict. The United States,

the representative of "self-destruction" and the "absence of historicity" (*Geschichtslosigkeit*), falls in line with the coalition of countries opposed to the one nation that had inherited Greece's glorious "beginning" of the history of the West. For the moment at least, Germany is able to limit herself to a "spiteful look" in that direction, and can faithfully await the "decisive moment" of victory.[96] Once again stereotypes surface that, though they have a long history, were most common during the First World War: "What this country lacks—Max Weber declares, referring to the United States, now recently involved in the war—is *historic destiny* [*das geschichtliche Schicksal*]."[97] Spengler, in turn, claims in 1933 that the United States, like the Soviet Union, lacks not only "profundity," but "the authentic historical tragicness [*geschichtliche Tragik*], and the great destiny [*das große Schicksal*] which has for centuries educated and deepened the soul of Western peoples."[98] During the course of the Second World War the stereotype, more or less analogous to the one stated by Weber, experiences new life, and not only in Heidegger. In the fall of 1942, ironically commenting upon the "the Nazi discovery of Europe," Thomas Mann cites Baldur von Schirach who, at the Conference of European Youth in Vienna, asks the American contingent: "Where are your Prassiteleses and Rembrandts? . . . Where do you get the nerve to bear arms, in the name of a sterile continent, against the divine inspiration of European genius?"[99]

That Germany "would lose the war, became certain to us only in the fall of 1941," Jaspers writes, referring perhaps to both the quagmire in the Soviet Union as well as to the United States's entrance into the conflict.[100] This certainty, however, is not shared by Heidegger. American intervention renders the war even more bitter and bloody; but perhaps only through the "pain of sacrifice" would Germany, the "historical humankind" that represents the Greco-Western beginning, be "ripe" enough to see it through.[101] Interpretation of the war as a clash between incomplete and absolute nihilism, the latter being the only one capable of mastering technology and of resolving the struggle for world dominion and the new beginning, cannot withstand the end of Germany's spectacular, lightning-quick victories. With regard to this, the philosophical interpretation of the battle of Stalingrad is particularly significant. The Soviet victory is considered a victory of "complete technicalization" and industrial and social planning; in this way, the Soviet Union "realizes a metaphysical advantage."[102] At this point, German victory can no longer be desired in the name of "new humanity," or the

German "overman," the only one truly up to par with technology and modern metaphysics. The battle of Stalingrad marks, perhaps, not only a turning point in the Second World War, but also a crucial point in the evolution of Heidegger's thought. After all, official propaganda itself is now forced to cease exalting the efficiency of the Third Reich's war machine and to speak dismayingly of the "divisions of motorized robots" set into motion by the Soviet Union. This is according to Goebbels, who contrasts "Eastern Bolshevism" and "historical dangers" to "Western humanity" and Germany's "historical mission" to save Europe.[103]

Again, this is not to amalgamate the ideas of a great intellectual with those of the regime's propaganda minister; the contradictions continue to be relevant and ever present (with regard, for example, to the fiery anti-Semitism that Goebbels demonstrates on this occasion when addressing the "Judaic-Bolshevik" threat). The fact remains that, beginning with the campaign against the Soviet Union, and even more so after the defeat at Stalingrad, certain currents that were not always in support of Nazism and that at times even contradicted it, call now more than ever for unity in the name of saving the West. This is the case with Franz Joseph Rarkowski, the military Catholic archbishop who, in an appeal made on June 29, 1941, immediately after the start of the "great and decisive offensive to the east," defines Germany as "the 'heart-population' of Europe,"[104] an expression coined by Hölderlin, and one dear to Heidegger, who refers to it repeatedly. The Reich's propaganda presents the war to the east as a mortal clash between the West and "Central Asia"—Thomas Mann notes shortly after the defeat at Stalingrad—in an attempt to shatter the anti-Nazi alliance by way of a rallying call to arms against both the Asian and the "red menace."[105] Perhaps such a motif is present in Heidegger, as well.

One thing is certain: the interpretation of the war has radically changed since the initial campaign to the west: No longer is the will to power juxtaposed to the will to power (even though the expression "absolute nihilism" is preferred). What is now at stake to the east is the very soul of Germany, " 'the sacred heart' of Western populations."[106] This too must be a widespread theme[107] if, in criticizing the propaganda of the Third Reich, Thomas Mann continues to insist that the " 'sacred' . . . German soil" has "for a long time been desecrated and tarnished by lies and crime."[108] According to Heidegger, what is most at stake now, in addition to Germany and the West, is being, or rather, Being:

> We are approaching a moment in history when uniqueness is no longer determined solely by the given world situation and our own history within it. "What is at stake" not only concerns the being or non-being of our historical people; it does not concern merely the being and non-being of "European" culture, because at this level one invariably has to deal with beings. But above all, and originally [*anfänglich*], the decision concerns being and non-being in their essence, in the truth of their essence. How are beings to be saved and protected in the liberty of their essence, if the essence of Being is uncertain, unquestioned and even forgotten?[109]

From this moment on, Germany is no longer the representative of active nihilism, struggling for a diverse configuration of beings, but rather a country that is battling and sacrificing for the "truth of being." In this respect, "sacrifice entails the dismissal of beings on the road to safeguarding the favor of being."[110] The German soldier is no longer the *Übermensch* better able to command technology than his enemies; instead, he is the desperate custodian of the truth of being who, for the sake of being, can sacrifice himself and die now that he has dismissed calculative thought. In Germany's desperate resistance, the last glimpse of Greece and the truth of being lives on. And as her undoing becomes clearer, so too does the pathos of Thermopylae, defended by Germany against the new Persia represented by the Soviet Union.

One can well understand, then, Heidegger's new and more sensitive position with regard to his judgment of Nietzsche, which is revealed with particular clarity during the course of his 1944–45 lectures. What is particularly illuminating is the difference between his comments made in 1940 regarding the central theme of Nietzsche's last work, that is, regarding classic nihilism as the "ideal of *extreme power*," and those comments made in 1944–45. In 1940 Heidegger states: "Such nihilism stems from ordinary life, it paves the way 'for a new order,' and for those who wish to perish, it even suggests the 'desire for the end.' Given this duality, nihilism simultaneously clears the way and allows for new possibilities."[111] Clearly, classic nihilism is now personified by the Nazi forces at that very moment sweeping away the corrupt Western democracies and establishing the "new order" which, of course, is hardly the end of nihilism, but nonetheless appears full of promise. In 1944–45—with the shadow of defeat now looming over Germany—all of this has vanished: With its "ideal of *extreme power*," "Nietzsche's metaphysics . . . takes the shape of extreme nihilism."[112]

One can understand how this interpretation might trigger some debate, if not with the regime, then certainly with National Socialists. The fact remains, however, that to the very end Heidegger thoroughly identifies with Germany at war. Even toward the end of the conflict Heidegger writes to Carl Ulmer, one of his disciples now at the Eastern front, that such is the only existence worthy of a German.[113] And in fact, at times his interpretation of Nietzsche's nihilism seems to want to take on the shape of a new ideological position that would justify the desperate struggle of the German forces in the East:

> Sacrifice is found in the essence of an event in which being demands for man the truth of being. This is why sacrifice does not allow for any assessment which, from time to time, regards it as either useful or useless, no matter whether the goals are high or low. Any such assessment would distort the essence of sacrifice.[114]

This according to *Nachwort zu: "Was ist Metaphysik?"* which appears in 1943. A year later, Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno publish *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, in which a bitter argument is made against the celebration of "sacrifice." This celebration, so dear to "trendy irrationalists," is said to "deify the victim," a victim whose "substantiality," however, is "just as apparent as the immortality of the butchered." Among the "trendy irrationalists," Klages is cited in particular,[115] though Heidegger too, at least indirectly, is included among them. For Heidegger, sacrifice is necessary now more than ever given that every plausible calculation seems to instill the belief that power relations are changing unfavorably for Germany. Thus the insistence that sacrifice is "the purest experience of the voice of being." It is only natural that "the first to respond to the voice of being" is German "historical humanity" which, "like the Greeks, is called upon to write poetry and to philosophize."[116] The result is Germany's sacrifice, and her incessant loss of blood in the East: the only hope was that other populations would respond to the voice of being as well. . . .

A cycle, then, is complete. The theme of authentic and "decisive" existence, an existence that "knows no fear" and is able to recognize itself as a being-toward-death, is one that *Sein und Zeit* picks up again, toward the end of the war, from the *Kriegsideologie* (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 8). Having undergone a complex transformation, however, this theme configures itself as "availability to death" (*Bereitschaft zum Tode*) in the name of the "truth of being" and the rejection, at all costs, of "modernity."[117]

## 6. Germany, "Guilt," and the Assessment of the Worldwide Will to Power

Germany's defeat triggers a new stage in the development of Heidegger's thought: War and the will to power are themselves expressions of the modern world's technical standardization. The manner in which Heidegger attempts to justify himself before the allied forces that occupy Germany immediately after the war is already significant. The Nazis, he declares,

> referred to Nietzsche, for whom "truth" has no foundation or autonomous content, but rather is only a means of the will to power, and thus a mere "idea," a subjective representation. And what was and is grotesque is that this scientific, "political" concept coincides with the "idea" and with the theories of "ideology," Marxism and communism.[118]

Marx's denunciation of ideological "false consciousness" as a technique for legitimizing unconfessed and unconfessable interests, and his pathos of science and of the objectivity of knowledge, are portrayed as the exaltation of an overwhelming will to power that leaves no room for the autonomy and objectivity of knowledge.[119] Heidegger boasts of having argued against this theory, allegedly common to both the Nazis and the Marxists, in his rectorial speech in 1933.[120]

In reality, if his speech argues against the reduction of the "spiritual world of a people" to the "superstructure of a culture," it is only in order to affirm the fact that "the *spiritual world* of a people . . . is the protective power of the forces of earth and blood."[121] In 1935, referring directly to his speech delivered two years earlier, Heidegger goes as far as to accuse the new "propagandistic strategy" of "Russian communism" of trying to reduce spirituality and culture to a mixture of "ornamental objects and furniture" that are unrelated to the "historical mission of our people, the center of the West."[122] The target of his argument is certainly the anti-Nazi congress *Pour la Défense de la Culture*, which takes place in Paris in June of 1935 (with the participation of Germans such as Ernst Bloch, Bertolt Brecht, and Heinrich Mann, among others). The conference, even at its preparatory stage, promotes the slogan: "For a literature of truth, peace, and liberty." This appeal to the "truth" is repeated continuously during the congress, always in bitter opposition to Nazism, which is accused of reducing, or attempting to reduce, culture to an instrument for the legitimization of power. Not by chance, one of the participants of the next congress, held in 1937, is Julien Benda, the

one who had bitterly denounced the "betrayal of the clergy" and intellectuals, above all during the course of the First World War, accusing them of giving in to the nationalistic passions and to the ideology of war. Here, however, he dedicates himself to battling Nazi-fascism in the name of the autonomy of culture.[123] Instead, Heidegger, in condemning the new "propagandistic strategy of Russian communism," rejects "the position of the littérateur and esthete" (*alles Literaten- und Ästhetenthum*).[124] The one who is diffident with regard to the slogans that focus upon the autonomy of culture, is Heidegger himself, in his 1935 *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. It is hardly by chance that, even as early as 1930, he had targeted "self-exhausting *freischwebend* speculation," and thus the *freischwebend* intellectual theorized by Mannheim (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 6).

This is not, however, the essential point: If, during the course of 1940 and the first phase of the war, the incomplete nihilism of democracy, socialism and Marxism is favorably compared to the absolute nihilism of Nietzsche (and of Nazism); now, on the other hand, Hitler's defeat and the assimilation of Marx and Nietzsche, and of communism and Nazism, in the name of the will to power, allows for Marx and the revolutionary tradition to also be blamed for the resultant catastrophe in the West (of which the two world wars and Nazism are an integral part). In fact, it is now Marx himself who comes to represent "the position of extreme nihilism"[125] rather than incomplete nihilism. On the one hand, absolute nihilism (Nietzsche and Nazism) plays a positive role in 1940 because, by putting an end to hypocrisy and "half-measures" (democracy, socialism, and so on), it also paves the way for a "new beginning." On the other hand, absolute or extreme nihilism now has an unequivocally negative meaning given that it serves to indicate the lowest point to which the West and the entire planet have been led to by the oblivion of being.

According to Heidegger's assessment, there is no room for "moral indignation" with regard to Führers (note that the term is now used only in the plural); such indignation is misleading and ridiculous since it fails to recognize them as "necessary consequences" of the oblivion of being.[126] This theme had already been deployed in 1940–41 in order to provide an indirect, "metaphysical" justification for Nazi Germany's policy of expansion, a justification that is now replaced by a condemnation that overshadows everyone and everything. In 1940–41 there was room for distinction: unlike her enemies, Germany was able to demonstrate absolute nihilism, free of hypocrisy and half-measures; now, in the

absence of any difference or nuance, it is no longer possible to identify targets to condemn: "communism," "fascism," and "world democracy" are merely different names for the "universal dominion of the will to power."[127] To the extent that they are expressions of an event that infinitely transcends them and that has made the entire planet homogeneous and uniform, Führers and their *Führerschaft* are now themselves essentially uniform and homogenous (*gleichförmig*) beyond their "national differences."[128]

And the gas chambers and the extermination of the Jews? To Marcuse, who raises the issue, Heidegger responds, in January of 1948, that the allies treated the "Oriental Germans" in the same way that Hitler treated the "Jews."[129] The great distance with which Heidegger usually removes himself in order to make judgements upon centuries and millennia of history does not seem to prevent him from taking a position with regard to well-determined events that would seem to be much closer to home. Such as, for example, the Berlin Blockade ordered by the Soviet Union in 1948, an event that is immediately "metaphysically" reinterpreted by Heidegger at a conference the following year: "Agriculture has now become a mechanized food industry; the production of corpses in gas chambers and death camps is essentially the same thing, as is the starvation that is produced in a country which is blockaded, or the production of hydrogen bombs."[130] The fact that Heidegger includes the practice of military "blockades" in this assessment is particularly interesting. It allows for the accusal not only of the Soviet Union (the Berlin Blockade had ended in May of the same year) but of the Western democracies as well. In the ensuing debate over who was to be "blamed" after the First World War, Weber spoke of the "some 750,000 men" who were lost to Germany because of the "blatantly illegal" "English blockade."[131] The theme was then further developed by Carl Schmitt, who vilifies the English practice of the naval blockade as a form of total war that eliminates "the continental distinction between combatants and non-combatants" and strikes "without distinction the entire population of the region blockaded."[132]

The theme is taken up again after the Second World War: "maritime war" and the practice of "blockades"—writes Schmitt, in opposition not only to Versailles but above all to Nürnberg, and in about the same period as Heidegger's conference cited above—are, to a very large extent, "characteristic of the pure war of annihilation."[133] The positions taken by Heidegger and Schmitt are part of the debate on guilt that is

again made acute by the fall, or the impending fall, of the Third Reich. Just months before the regime's collapse, Thomas Mann insists that the German people be "aware of the inexpiable" nature of the damage that Germany has inflicted upon humanity. There is one precondition to reconciliation, and this is the "full and unimpeded awareness of the horrendous crimes," the burden and gravity of which the German people, perhaps even then, continue to ignore. With political clarity, and at the same time deep psychological penetration, Mann informs his radio listeners of the reasons for this ignorance: it is due "in part to the fact that you were isolated and violently confined to stupidity and narrow-mindedness, in part to the fact that you instinctively decided to save yourselves by refusing to consciously accept the knowledge of these horrors." The repression must end and the "production of death" which is still taking place with the Russians in the East, must be looked square in the face.[134]

A few months after the war, Jaspers publishes the product of his own deeply felt self-criticism, *Die Schuldfrage*. It is translated into Italian, with the author's consent, as *La colpa della Germania*.[135] With respect to the end of the First World War, a significant development has occured. At that time, Jaspers was in complete agreement with Weber, whom he credited with having condemned the victors' ambition of humiliating Germany to the point of extracting a "confession of guilt."[136] Weber was also credited with having denounced in his own country "the political masochism of a pacifism without dignity, which voluntarily wallows in guilt."[137] On a more philosophical level, after World War I, Jaspers ascribes "guilt" to each individual and to every human assemblage. Given "the limitation of resources"[138] and therefore the inevitable struggle for "the extension of *Dasein*'s space [*Daseinsraum*]."[139] the fact that one exists is the cause of our guilt: "My *Dasein* reduces the space of others, in the same way that the others reduce my space. Every bit that I obtain eliminates the possibility of the other to reclaim a portion of the space available. My gain is the other's loss. My life is contingent upon the victory of my forefathers."[140] And so the blame is unmistakable: "If by my *Dasein* I *allow for conditions* which, though indispensable *to my existence*, exact struggle and suffering from others, then I am guilty of the exploitation by which I live."[141] So it makes no sense to ascribe guilt solely to Germany: Together and in competition with the other powers, she was forced to take part in the struggle for the vital space that is indispensable to human existence.

Guilt that is neither juridical, nor political, nor even moral in a strict

sense of the term, since there is no determinate responsibility or action, is a theme that is taken up again after the Second World War; but the modifications are profound:

> There is a certain solidarity among men which makes each one co-responsible to some extent for all of the injustice and iniquity in the world, and especially for those crimes which take place in his presence, or with his knowledge. Should he fail to do everything within his power to impede them, then he too is guilty. If he does not risk his own life in order to prevent the massacre of others, but rather remains a passive witness to the event, then he too feels guilty, in a way that cannot be fathomed juridically, politically or morally.

This is the "metaphysical guilt"[142] incurred by those Germans who, though by no means directly responsible for the crimes committed by the Third Reich, nonetheless did not risk or sacrifice their lives in an attempt to prevent them: "The fact that we are alive, this is our guilt."[143] Even though "metaphysical guilt" has the misfortune of enlarging the target of this denunciation, at the risk of eliminating any necessary distinctions, it still has the undeniable merit of being a painful expression of self-criticism, completely absent after the First World War.

In the renewed debate regarding Germany's "guilt" or "responsibility"—Thomas Mann prefers the latter category, the more political[144]—Heidegger's position is also to be found. Rather than eliminate guilt, he envelops it, along with determinate responsibility, in an assessment that incorporates genocide, military blockades, and the mechanization of agriculture into a single, enormous catastrophe that takes place in the name of the will to power. To Jaspers, who sends him a copy of *Schuldfrage*, Heidegger responds by saying that "the cause of evil [*die Sache des Bösen*] is not finite." One case in point is Stalin's ceaseless victories, that are merely one aspect of an event that involves everyone and everything. Instead, the cause of evil "has now entered a true universal phase" which, beyond the "realm of politics," reduced at this point to a mere "semblance of existence" (*Scheindasein*), refers to "other relationships of being" (*Seinsverhältnisse*).[145] Why—one might ask—is it not until 1950 (the date of the letter cited above), that is, only after 1945, that evil manages to actually enter the *Weltstadium*? One thing seems clear: the defeat of Nazi-Germany certainly does not make Heidegger's assessment of the tremendous events in the West any less catastrophic.

In any case, Heidegger indignantly rejects Marcuse's call for self-crit-

icism. It is true that in his reply Heidegger cites Jaspers ("The fact that we are alive, that is our guilt"), but this is only to underscore the great risk which any open opposition to the regime would have entailed, even to "family members," and for which he is now being reproached.[146] Given the equivalence between one Führer and another, any expected self-criticism from the author of the rectorial speech would be inappropriate. Before being solicited by Marcuse, Heidegger counterattacks, even on a personal level: If one's position with regard to Nazism must be referred to as "guilt," "then isn't this essentially guilt by default [*wesentliches Versäumnis*]?" Wouldn't it have been better "if around 1933 all of those who were able to had worked to purify and moderate, slowly and secretively, the movement which came to power"?[147] This is the same idea posited in 1936. To Löwith, who insists on outlining the most despicable aspects of the Third Reich to his teacher, or former teacher (who is facing him wearing the Nazi insignia), Heidegger responds with a vehement denunciation of those intellectuals who had distanced themselves: "If these gentlemen hadn't deemed themselves too refined to get involved, things would have gone differently; but instead I was completely alone."[148] Here, 1933 would appear to be not so much the beginning of a catastrophe, but rather a missed opportunity: and this assessment remains essentially unchanged even nine years later, despite the resultant tragedy.

## 7. HEIDEGGER, JÜNGER, AND SCHMITT

Among the intellectuals whom Heidegger deems "too refined" to dirty their hands with the Third Reich, is, perhaps, Ernst Jünger. Jünger never officially supports Nazism, though he does contribute to its rise to power; and even years after the end of the war, he credits Nazism for having expressed "in the beginning, many of the right ideas." So much so that he doesn't "really distance [himself]" until the "Crystal Night," that is until the end of 1938.[149] At the time of the Weimar Republic, Jünger exalts, in reference to the First World War, the "voluptuousness of blood" and the "mood intoxicated with blood and roses."[150] He adds that what ennobles that original "vital form," that is, "struggle," is "chivalry" (*Ritterlichkeit*).[151] What emerges from this description, however, is a reality much less noble, one that, far from being condemned, is aesthetically transfigured. It is true that the outbreak of the war puts an

end to that which is effeminate and corrupt in the "worship of the mind," and that it comes to signify an invigorating "rebirth of barbarism."[152] "When life returns to primitivism, the charade" of "civilization" ends, and "man's social conventions" are revealed to be "the patched rags of a beggar." What then surfaces is "primal man, the caveman, untamed and with all of his unrestrained drives": from the "depths of the soul" emerges "the beast" which abandons itself to war as if to "irresistible intoxication," or an "inebriating orgy."[153]

After 1945, Jünger assesses the war and its atrocities as such: "The Greeks, when battling against barbarians, and the Christians when against pagans, adopted crueler measures. In the last war, the Germans conducted a different campaign on the eastern front than on the western one, and not merely because of the difference in terrain."[154] "Clausewitz's prescription, that a population should be spared any useless bloodshed, appears to lack validity: only when the enemy accepts certain rules can this in fact be the case. Xenophon's ordeal had already demonstrated the panic of an army that had the prospect of falling into the hands of an Eastern enemy." "In military battles to the east, rules that apply on the Western battlefield are no longer valid."[155] This seems almost an echo of what Hitler would direct on the eve of the assault against the Soviet Union: "We must remove ourselves from any sense of soldierly comradeship . . . in the battle against Bolshevism, one cannot count upon the enemy's acting in accordance with the principles of humanity or international law."[156] And therefore . . .

After 1945, Jünger seems to criticize Hitler primarily for the fact that, "in the last few months of the war," he would have liked to "inform the Western powers that the Geneva Convention was no longer acceptable: this would have meant extending to the West the rules of engagement adopted in the East." What, then, is the cause of this barbaric turn of the war that seems to be imminent even in the West? More so than Nazism, Jünger blames the revolutionary political tradition: If "war among populations has become more horrendous," it is due to the outbreak of "civil war world-wide" that has "assailed and degraded military tradition" and, "above all, eliminated the distinction between those who are armed and those who are defenseless." "There are three major events," he continues, "that have led to this state of affairs: the Reformation, the French Revolution of 1789, and the Russian revolution of 1917, the latter still going on."[157]

The development of Carl Schmitt's thought proceeds similarly. In

the thirties, his condemnation of total, discriminatory war does not seem to have any universal value, rather it presupposes the "homogeneity" of European peoples "on the basis of civilization," a homogeneity that cannot be ascribed to Africa or to the Soviet Union (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 8). Then, in 1939, Schmitt writes that, in terms of international law, war should be considered "equally just by both contenders," but only to the extent that they are authentic states: "International law presupposes in each State a minimal amount of organization on the domestic front, and a foreign policy characterized by a strong military defense."[158] As a result, "any population incapable" of statehood, or rather, incapable of statehood at the level of modern warfare, should not be considered "the subject of international law."[159] This "discriminatory" clause is not limited to colonies, even though it is made with specific reference to Abyssinia. In the meantime, Czechoslovakia has been dismembered, and Poland's fate is likewise sealed, to the Reich's advantage. It is within this framework that Schmitt's theory must be contemplated; finally, the Reich would substitute the state, above all the small state, as the subject of international law.[160]

At the very least, the condemnation of total, discriminatory war has many loopholes. After the Second World War, on the other hand, Schmitt insists that it was primarily Marxism and Bolshevism that created "absolute hostility," an element previously unknown to the *jus publicum europaeum*, and the true origin of the atrocities and the catastrophe in the West.[161] And yet, the assessments of both Schmitt and Jünger can be traced according to a clear continuum with respect to their previous assessments of the First World War.

In his argument against Versailles, Schmitt denounces not only the intrinsic, interventional nature of democratic universalism ("In international law, the general, universal concepts that embrace the world are the typical weapons of interventionalism"),[162] but above all he attributes to democracy the ideological, "total," and "discriminatory" war that has sadly resurfaced in European history.[163] In turn, Jünger, pointing a finger at the Western democracies, asserts that the "political war" that they despise is infinitely preferable to "the people's war": the difference being that the former "is sheltered by morality, and so the excitement of lower instincts and of hatred is not needed to spur the masses to combat."[164] The hope or pretense of banishing war and suffering instead serves only to produce the unfortunate "confusion between war and murder," making vain any attempt to respect the traditional limits of war.[165]

Thus, the harsh conditions imposed by the Treaty of Versailles are not perceived to be the result of international imperialism (and therefore, at least in part, Germany's responsibility as well), but rather the product of a democratic and revolutionary tradition, to which Germany, authentic and more profound, is fortunately immune. What is interesting is that, on the other side of the Rhine, in the same time period, the nationalists of the *Action Française* blame the democratic tradition of their country, and superstitious faith in unity and in the will of the nation, for having derailed victory and prevented Germany's dismemberment. One of the most significant of these nationalistic accusations is translated in Nazi-Germany in order to demonstrate the will to destruction harbored on the other side of the Rhine.[166] Regardless, Jünger and Schmitt place the burden of responsibility not upon the *Action Française*, but rather upon the French Revolution and modernity, and everything characteristic of it. Bourgeois or socialist democracies try in vain to assume a dignified "pacifistic" posture, but on the one hand, pacifism is considered the expression of a philistine and banausic vision of the world; on the other hand, it is considered synonymous with ignoble violence, unconfessed and unconfessable. According to Jünger, democratic and pacifistic culture not only eliminates the distinction between war and murder, but in the inevitable "struggle for vital space," it chooses the most beastly and most contemptible "form of killing"; that which, safe from all danger, cowardly assaults the defenseless "unborn." Abortion fully reveals the "the dual nature of the last man who is at once weak and beastly."[167]

The figure of the last man is first condemned by Nietzsche and then, in the thirties, by Heidegger who, following Nietzsche's lead, denounces it as a repulsive symbol of the democratic standardization and the superficiality of the modern world.[168] As for Jünger, between the wars he regards it as embodied in the would-be pacifist who in reality is an instrument of a war—or a massacre—all the more total and discriminatory in its cowardice. It is based upon this assessment that Jünger and Schmitt vigorously challenge the Weimar Republic and the Treaty of Versailles; and the same reason for which they support and sympathize with Nazism. The same assessment is made, with slight modifications, even after the Second World War. Certainly, the condemnation of total, discriminatory war is now directed at the Bolshevik Revolution and the Marxist revolutionary tradition, but this is not to say that the French Revolution has been forgotten; it is again attributed with the responsi-

bility of having been the first (after the Crusades) to banish "the traditional delimitation of war between European states."[169] And so, the merit for having been the first to denounce the horrors of "absolute hostility" is ascribed to "an outstanding and courageous thinker of the *Ancien Régime*" who, on the one hand, was able to make the most of the experience of the French Revolution, and on the other hand, prophetically directed attention to Russia, and to her new and disturbing revolutionary turmoil.[170] It is, paradoxically, Joseph de Maistre who surfaces as an enemy of "total war." While it is true that de Maistre accuses French revolutionaries of having made what were once limited and chivalrous wars barbaric and ruthless, at the same time he exalts the "enthusiasm of slaughter," not to mention the fact that here and there he seems to even justify the genocide carried out by the Spanish against the Indians.[171] Interestingly enough, respects are paid to Joseph de Maistre at a conference in Franco's Spain, in 1962. There, the civil war that took place twenty-five years earlier is recalled, not with the aim of condemning total war, perhaps by citing examples such as Guernica (the bombing of which certainly did not distinguish between military and civilian targets), but rather to pay respect to Francisco Franco's regime: "In the years between 1936 and 1938 . . . Spain managed to defend herself, by means of a war of national liberation, from the danger of falling into the clutches of international communism."[172]

Heidegger, Jünger, and Schmitt—these three great German intellectuals of the twentieth century, so different from one another, have at least this much in common: They are content, at least in the beginning, with the collapse of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Nazism; likewise, around 1933 they participate in the bitter condemnation of democracy, socialism, and the revolutionary political tradition; and then, after the war, though each in a different manner, they finally incorporate the criticism of Nazism into a vast historical assessment that ascribes responsibility also, and above all, to the revolutionary political tradition. It is within this context that the "revisionist" historiography of today must be situated: It is not by chance that it is one of Heidegger's disciples, the historian Ernst Nolte, who, more openly than any other, places the blame for the holocaust and genocide upon the "Asian" barbarians, whom Hitler imitates, with the Bolshevik Revolution in mind.[173] Suddenly, it all becomes clear: The West, the authentic West, uncontaminated by "Asian" influence, is again assured of a clear conscience. The theme of the decline of the West first makes its appearance and gains

notoriety toward the end of the First World War; now, it is overturned in its final, blinding transfiguration.

## NOTES

1. Thomas Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen,* ed. Hanno Helbling (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 455.

2. Oswald Spengler, "Ist Weltfriede möglich? Telegraphische Antwort auf eine amerikanische Rundfrage" (1936), in *Reden und Aufätze,* ed. Ildegard Kornhardt (Münchenm 1937), pp. 292ff.

3. Oswald Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (München, 1980), p. 781.

4. Karl Jaspers, *Vernunft und Existenz* (Bremen, 1947), p. 78.

5. Ibid., p. 79.

6. Max Weber, "Die Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre,* 6th ed., ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen, 1985), p. 604.

7. Karl Jaspers, *Notizen zu Martin Heidegger,* ed. Hans Saner (München, 1978), pp. 180ff.

8. Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche. Einführung in das Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1936), pp. 228ff.

9. Otto F. Bollnow, "Zum Begriff der Ganzheit bei Othmar Spann," *Finanzarchiv: Neue Folge* 6, no. 2 (1938): 303–305, 315.

10. Cf. Guido Schneeberger, *Nachlese zu Heidegger: Dokumentz zu seinem Leben und Denken* (Bern, 1962), p. 4n.

11. Cf. Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: Unterwegs zu seiner Biographie* (Frankfurt–New York, 1988), pp. 210–13.

12. So states Julius Evola, *L' "Operaio" nel pensiero di Ernst Jünger* (Roma, 1974), p. 7.

13. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt, 1980), vol. 48, p. 56.

14. Johann Huizinga, *Im Schatten von morgen: Eine Diagnose des kulturellen Leidens unserer Zeit* (Bern-Leipzig, 1935), pp. 92–103.

15. Oswald Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung* (München, 1933), pp.xi and ii.

16. Spengler, "Ist Weltfriede möglich?" pp. 292ff.

17. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (München-Zürich, 1984), p. 76.

18. Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," in *Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 43, p. 191.

19. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (April 1941), in *Essays,* ed. Hermann Kurzke (Frankfurt a.M., 1986), vol. 2, p. 265.

20. Martin Heidegger, "Grundbegriffe," in *Gesamtausgabe,* vol. 51, p. 18.

21. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 141, 264.

22. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (October 1940 and August 1941), in *Essays*, vol. 2, pp. 263, 267ff.

23. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 264ff.

24. Ibid., p. 168.

25. Ibid., p. 138.

26. Ibid., p. 51.

27. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (June 27, 1943), in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 272.

28. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 139.

29. Ibid., p. 73.

30. Ibid., p. 16.

31. Ibid.

32. Ibid., p. 87.

33. Ibid., p. 205.

34. Martin Heidegger, "Zur Seinsfrage" (1935), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, p. 390; cf. Martin Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933-34: Tatsachen und Gedanken," published as an appendix to *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt, 1983), p. 24.

35. Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Stuttgart: Bibliothek der Moderne, 1982), p. 79.

36. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," pp. 94ff. Heidegger infers from Jünger the theme of the photo as a "weapon": cf. "Über den Schmerz" (1934), in Ernst Jünger, *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart, 1978), vol. 7, p. 182; and *Der Arbeiter*, p. 280.

37. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 333.

38. Ernst Jünger, "Die totale Mobilmachung" (1930), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, *passim*.

39. Ibid., pp. 130, 135, 137.

40. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, pp. 162ff.

41. Heidegger, "Grundbegriffe," pp. 36–38.

42. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 297.

43. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 53, p. 191 n.

44. Martin Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Andenken,' " in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 52, pp. 143 and 78.

45. Martin Heidegger, "Aristoteles Metaphysik" (1–3 1931), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 33, p. ix; cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Der Wille zur Macht," af. 419 (1885), in *Samtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München-Berlin–New York), vol. 2, p. 679.

46. Alfred Baeumler, "Hellas und Germanien" (1937), in *Studien zur deutschen Geistesgeschichte* (Berlin, 1937), p. 311.

47. Martin Heidegger, "Parmenides," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 54, p. 63.

48. Cf. Ernst Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (München, 1963), p. 500.

49. There are even some headlong assaults on the part of, for example, Christoph Steding (*Das Reich und die Krankheit der europaischen Kultur* [Hamburg, 1938]), who denounces Nietzsche as the theoretician of an apolitical or antipolitical culture infected by the cult of neutrality typical of Switzerland. Nietzsche assimilated Swiss tradition in Basel and through his contact with Burckhardt. In the same way that he is condemned as an admirer of Voltaire (pp. 35, 54), in the final analysis he is also condemned as an enemy, on a cultural front, of the Third Reich (p. 112). With regard to Steding's interpretation of Nietzsche, see also Giorgio Penzo, *Il superamento di Zarathustra: Nietzsche e il nazionalsocialismo* (Roma, 1987), pp. 341–51. What is also significant is how Franz Böhm (*Anti-Cartesianismus: Deutsche Philosophie im Widerstand* [Leipzig, 1939], p. 3) criticizes "the ideal of power" pursued by Nietzsche as *volklos*. This sort of criticism must have been quite diffuse if Jaspers, two years before Böhm's book, feels the need to defend Nietzsche from the accusation of Volksfremdheit: Nietzsche—Jaspers observes—despises the "masses," not the "people," the "authentic people" who for him are found "in the minority of the masters who, because of their creative natures, are called upon to frame laws" and who, in this sense, constitute "the constant object of a longing." Karl Jaspers, *Nietzsche. Einführung in des Verständnis seines Philosophierens* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1936), pp. 374ff.

50. Alfred Baeumler, *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker* (Leipzig, 1931), *passim*, and in particular pp. 67, 92–94.

51. Cf. Hans Heyse, *Idee und Existenz* (Hamburg, 1935), pp. 97, 141.

52. Böhm, *Anti-Cartesianismus*, pp. 38ff, 49, 189.

53. Carl Schmitt, *Nationalsozialismus und Völkerrecht* (Berlin, 1934), p. ii.

54. Carl Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Machte* (Berlin, 1939), pp. 70ff.

55. Ibid., p. 88.

56. Cf. texts reprinted in Reinhard Opitz, ed., *Europastrategien des deutschen Kapitals 1900–1945* (Köln, 1977), *passim*; with regard to the European Monroe Doctrine, Schmitt is the first to theorize it, in *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung*. This doctrine is well received, at times with specific reference to Schmitt; cf. again Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 630, 855, 938. Hitler makes official reference to the Monroe Doctrine in a discourse at the Reichstag on April 28, 1939 (cf. Joseph W. Bendersky, *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983], p. 273). With regard to the Nazi reference to the Monroe Doctrine, cf. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism* (New York, 1963), p. 156ff. As for "European" keywords used by the Third Reich, cf. Hans W. Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich: Einigungsbestrebungen im deutschen Machtbereich 1939–45* (München, 1987).

57. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 18.

58. Heidegger, "Grundbegriffe," p. 5.

59. Cf. Domenico Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel* (Milano: Guerini e associati, 1987), pp. 65–70. With regard to the "Prussian-German rise" against Napoleon, who had "oppressed and humiliated Germany," which Heidegger refers to in 1936, cf. Martin Heidegger, *Schelling: Vom Wesen der menschlichen Freiheit* (Tubingen, 1971), pp. 3, 1.

60. Cf. Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel und das deutsche Erbe: Philosophie und nationale Frage zwischen Revolution und Reaktion* (Köln: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989), cap. 1, § 5.

61. Mann, *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen*, pp. 40–43. A hint of the anti-Roman topos of the *Kriegsideologie* may be glimpsed even in Max Weber who, at the moment of German's defeat, equates America's "dominion of the world" with the dominion of Rome at the conclusion of the Punic wars: this in a letter dated November 24, 1918. Reprinted in Marianne Weber, *Max Weber: Ein Lebensbild* (Tübingen, 1926), p. 648.

62. In Luciano Canfora, *Cultura classica e crisi tedesca: Gli scritti politici di Wilamowitz 1914–1931* (Bari, 1977), p. 160.

63. So Heidegger states during the course of the summer semester of 1933; cf. Victor Farias, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt, 1989), p. 192.

64. Letter to H. Klores dated December 18, 1914, in Oswald Spengler, *Briefe 1913–1936*, eds. Anton Koktanek and Manfred Schröter (München, 1963), pp. 32ff.

65. Letter to H. Klores dated July 14, 1915, in ibid., p. 44.

66. Letter to H. Klores dated September 10, 1918, in ibid., p. 108; Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, p. 36.

67. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 41.

68. Cf. Luciano Canfora, *Ideologie del classicismo* (Torino, 1980), pp. 133–59.

69. Alfred Rosenberg, *Der Mythus des 20. Jahrhunderts* (München, 1937), pp. 55, 71, 74.

70. Ibid., pp. 34, 87.

71. Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, p. 97.

72. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1939), p. 172.

73. Cf. Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, pp. 413, 614.

74. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " p. 98.

75. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 98 n.

76. Letters to H. Klores dated July 14, 1915, and July 12, 1916, in Spengler, *Briefe*, pp. 44, 54.

77. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, pp. 49ff.

78. Thomas Mann, "Über die Lehre Spenglers" (1922), in *Essays*, vol. 3, p. 151.

79. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, p. 49.

80. Ibid., p. 687.

81. Ibid., p. 51.

82. Ibid., p. 686.

83. Arthur Zweininger, *Spengler im Dritten Reich. Eine Antwort auf Oswald Spenglers 'Jahre der Entscheidung'* (Oldenburg, 1933), pp. 88ff, 77.

84. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 3; Zweininger, a Nazi, makes this one of his prime targets in *Spengler im Dritten Reich*, p. 57.

85. Oswald Spengler, "Pessimismus?" (1921), in *Reden und Aufsätze*, p. 79.

86. Spengler, *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, p. 684.

87. Spengler, "Pessimismus?" p. 79.

88. Ibid., p. 63.

89. Oswald Spengler, "Nietzsche und sein Jahrhundert" (1924), in *Reden und Aufsätze*, p. 124.

90. Heidegger, "Parmenides," p. 78.

91. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 73.

92. Ibid., p. 137.

93. Heidegger, "Parmenides," p. 82.

94. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Andenken,' " p. 131.

95. Cf. Otto Pöggeler, "Heideggers politisches Selbstverständnis," in *Heidegger und die praktische Philosophie*, ed. Annemarie Gehtmann-Siefert and Otto Pöggeler (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), p. 61 n. 17

96. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " p. 68.

97. Max Weber, "Demokratie und Aristokratie im amerikanischen Leben," in *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg: Schiften und Reden (1914–1918)*, eds. Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Gangolf Hübinger (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988), p. 355.

98. Spengler, *Jahre der Entscheidung*, p. 48.

99. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (October 24, 1942), in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 271.

100. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophische Autobiographie* (Münche-Zürich, 1984), p. 77.

101. Heidegger, "Hölderlins Hymne 'Der Ister,' " p. 68.

102. Heidegger, "Parmenides," p. 127; with regard to this cf. Wolf-Dieter Gudopp, "Stalingrad-Heidegger-Marx," *Deutsche Zeitschrift fur Philosophie* 6 (1983): 672–87.

103. This as per a speech dated February 18, 1943, printed in *Völkischer Beobachter* the following day. As for *motorisierten Roboterdivisionen*, cf. Neulen, *Europa und das 3. Reich*, p. 38.

104. In Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, eds., *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte: 1939–1945* (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p. 75.

105. In Wolfgang Ruge and Wolfgang Schumann, eds., *Dokumente zur deutschen Geschichte: 1942–1945* (Frankfurt a.M., 1977), p. 31.

106. Martin Heidegger, "Heraklit," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 55, p. 181.

107. In 1935, Heyse, also an admirer of Hölderlin, whom he hails as "the poet of the German people and their mission," defines Germany as "*the heart of history*" (Heyse, *Idee und Existenz*, pp. 370, 97). Let us not forget that during

the Third Reich, Hölderlin is celebrated by a large political press as "the spokesman for the Sacred German Reich," as well as the bard of the West: This is the tone at the conclusion of an article that, in praising the "beautiful emulation" of German intellectuals with regard to this rediscovery and rereading of Hölderlin, not only are Baeumler and others cited, but Heidegger is as well (cf. Heinz O. Burger, "Die Entwicklung des Hölderlinbildes seit 1933," in *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literatur- und Geisteswissenschaft* 18 [1940]: 101–102). Croce also refers to this article, denouncing how Hölderlin was used for the ideological purposes of the Third Reich; cf. Benetto Croce, "Lo Hölderlin e i suoi critici," in *Discorsi di varia filosofia* (Bari, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 54–72.

108. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (January 14 and 16, 1945), in *Essays*, vol. 2, pp. 276–79.

109. Heidegger, "Parmenides," p. 241.

110. Martin Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' " in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 9, pp. 309ff.

111. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 102.

112. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche* (Frankfurt a.M., 1961), vol. 2, p. 339. Heidegger's development with regard to his judgement of Nietzsche is affirmed by Hannah Arendt as well. She locates the turning point between the second and the third volumes of *Nietzsche* published in 1961: "[T]he first volume explains Nietzsche, siding with him; the second volume is written in a subtle, but unequivocally polemical manner." In this way, however, the turning point is specified not in temporal terms, but rather in terms which are . . . typographical. Hannah Arendt refers, in fact, to a lecture in 1940, which appears immediately after the summary of his 1939 course that concludes the first volume. What is particularly emphasized is a passage which, commenting upon *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, according to which the will to power may also desire nothingness, Heidegger observes that this will to power and nothingness craves "negation, destruction, devastation." Hannah Arendt comments: "Heidegger's final word on Will concerns its destructive nature, in the same way that Nietzsche's last word concerns its "creativity" and "overabundance." Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York, 1978). Actually, this is a serious misunderstanding. The target of the polemic is here asceticism: along the lines of Nietzsche (*Zur Genealogie der Moral*, III, i), Heidegger points out that "even the negation of the world is nothing more than a camouflaged will to power," a will to power that desires nothingness and takes the shape we have seen (Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, vol. 2, p. 267). In contrast to this, the positive and creative role of the will to power characteristic of absolute nihilism is celebrated. This becomes clearer when we consider the lectures from Heidegger's second trimester in 1940: here, too, the same passage is cited from *Der Genealogie der Moral* (Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der europäische Nihilismus," p. 57), though this does not prevent Heidegger from vehemently arguing against those who fail to see the positive function of nihilism (and of the will to power): "Given the negative connotation of

'nihilistic' in the usual sense of nihilism, we can never fully understand the Nietzschean concept of nihilism" (ibid., p. 77). In reality, however, it is Hannah Arendt's reconstruction of the complex relationship between Heidegger and Nietzsche which is inaccurate: she asserts that in "*Sein und Zeit*, Nietzsche's name is never mentioned," when instead Nietzsche's presence in Heidegger's masterpiece is known to everybody, and it is Heidegger himself who cites him (cf. § 76).

113. Cf. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 154.

114. Heidegger, "Nachwort zu: 'Was ist Metaphysik?' " p. 311.

115. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, pp. 65ff.

116. Heidegger, "Parmenides," p. 250.

117. Heidegger, "Heraklit," p. 181.

118. In Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 188.

119. With regard to the radically diverse meaning of the criticism of ideology in Marx and Nietzsche, refer to Domenico Losurdo, "Le catene e i fiori. La critica dell'ideologia tra Marx e Nietzsche," *Hermeneutica* 6 (1986): 81–143.

120. Ott, *Martin Heidegger*, p. 188.

121. Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung*, pp. 14, 13.

122. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," pp. 52ff.

123. Cf. the passages of Johannes R. Becher, H. Mann and B. Brecht in *Zur Tradition der deutschen sozialistischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1979), vol. 1, p. 826; vol. 2, pp. 25ff; and vol. 4, pp. 117, 152ff. As for Benda, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "L'engagement e i suoi problemi. Fortuna e tramonto di una categoria nella cultura italiana," in *Prassi: Come orientarsi nel mondo*, eds. Gian Mario Cazzaniga, Domenico Losurdo, and Livio Sichirollo (Urbino, 1991).

124. Heidegger, "Einführung in die Metaphysik," p. 50; English translation, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 124 (modified).

125. Martin Heidegger, "Seminar in Zähringen 1973," in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 15, p. 393.

126. Martin Heidegger, "Überwindung der Metaphysik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen, 1954), p. 93. These are notes that Heidegger claims to have jotted down himself, with no ulterior explanations, between 1936 and 1946; they are published, however, only after 1945, and so for the most part are considered part of his postwar repertoire.

127. Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933–34," p. 25.

128. Heidegger, "Überwindung der Metaphysik," pp. 96ff.

129. Cf. the letters of Herbert Marcuse and Martin Heidegger dated August 28, 1947, and January 20, 1948, in Farias, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, pp. 372–75.

130. From a public conference in 1949, according to the testimony of Wolfgang Schirmacher, *Technik und Gelassenheit: Zeitkritik nach Heidegger* (Freiburg, 1983), p. 25.

131. Max Weber, "Zum Thema der 'Kriegschuld' " (1919), in *Gesammelte politische Schriften*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tubingen, 1971), p. 494.

132. Carl Schmitt, "Totaler Feind, totaler Krieg, totaler Staat" (1937), in *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar-Genf-Versailles 1929–1939* (Hamburg, 1940), p. 238; and "Staat als ein konkreter, an eine geschichtliche Epoche gebundener Begriff" (1941), in *Verfassungsrechtliche Aufsätze*, 3rd ed. (Berlin 1985), pp. 382ff.

133. Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Köln, 1950), p. 294.

134. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (January 14, 1945), in *Essays*, vol. 2, pp. 276ff.

135. Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage: für Völkermord gibt es keine Verjährung* (München: Piper, 1979). In Italian, *La colpa della Germania*, trans. R. De Rosa (Naples, 1947). [A literal translation of the Italian would be "Germany's Guilt." Jaspers's book has been translated from German into English as *The Question of German Guilt*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Capricorn Books, 1961).—Trans.]

136. Karl Jaspers, "Max Weber: Politiker, Forscher, Philosoph," in *Aneignung und Polemik: Gesammelte Reden und Aufsätze zur Geschichte der Philosophie*, ed. Hans Saner (München, 1968), p. 444.

137. Ibid., p. 436; this is a more or less textual citation of Weber; cf. Weber, *Max Weber*, p. 649.

138. Karl Jaspers, *Philosophie* (Berlin-Heidelberg, 1948), p. 500.

139. Ibid., p. 495.

140. Ibid., p. 496.

141. Ibid., pp. 506.

142. Karl Jaspers, "Die Schuldfrage" (1946), in *Hoffnung und Sorge: Schriften zur deutschen Politik* (München, 1965), p. 77.

143. Karl Jaspers, "Erneuerung der Universität" (1945), in *Hoffnung und Sorge*, p. 32.

144. Thomas Mann, "Deutsche Hörer!" (January 16, 1945), in *Essays*, vol. 2, p. 279.

145. Letter dated April 8, 1950, in Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, *Briefwechsel 1920–1963*, eds. Walter Biemel and Hans Saner (Frankfurt, 1990), p. 202.

146. In Farias, *Heidegger und der Nationalsozialismus*, p. 374.

147. Heidegger, "Das Rektorat 1933–34," pp. 25ff.

148. Cf. Karl Löwith, *Mein Leben In Deutschland vor und nach 1933: Ein Bericht* (Stuttgart, 1986), p. 58.

149. Cf. Julien Hervier, *Entretiens avec Ernst Jünger* (Paris, 1986), p. 88.

150. Ernst Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis" (1922) and "In Stahlgewittern" (1920), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 17; and vol. 1, p. 11, respectively.

151. Jünger, "Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis," pp. 49ff.

152. Ibid., p. 35.

153. Ibid., pp. 15, 13.

154. Ernst Jünger, "Der gordische Knoten" (1953), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 412.

155. Ibid., pp. 417, 450.

156. In Ernst Nolte, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg 1917–1945: Nationalsozialismus und Bolschewismus* (Frankfurt, 1987), pp. 465ff.

157. Jünger, "Der gordische Knoten," pp. 412, 420–21.

158. Schmitt, "Neutralität und Neutralisierungen, (1939). Zu Christoph Steding 'Das Reich und die Krankheit der europäischen Kultur,' " in *Positionen und Begriffe*, p. 285.

159. Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung*, p. 83. Republishing the concluding chapter of the essay in *Positionen und Begriffe*, Schmitt makes a minor, but significant, addition: "*Ab integro nascitur ordo*": it is 1940, the apogee of the Third Reich's power, and the "new order" seems within reach.

160. Ibid., pp. 72–76.

161. Cf. in particular Carl Schmitt, *Theorie des Partisanen* (Berlin, 1963), pp. 56ff.

162. Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Großraumordnung*, p. 43.

163. Ibid., p. 58.

164. Ernst Jünger, "Über den Schmerz" (1934), in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 178.

165. Ibid., p. 157.

166. Cf. Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, p. 113.

167. Jünger, "Über den Schmerz," pp. 157ff. Significantly, more or less in this same time period, Spengler denounces abortion as a practice that threatens the German people's "racial health" and distracts them from their "historical mission" by depriving them of their decisive "weapon" (fertility). Oswald Spengler, "Einführung zu einem Aufsatz Richard Korherrs über den Geburtenrückgang" (1927), in *Reden und Aufsätze*, p. 135–37.

168. Cf. Heidegger, "Nietzsche: Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst," pp. 258ff, and "Nietzsches metaphysische Grundstellung," pp. 33–36.

169. Schmitt, *Theorie des Partisanen*, p. 40.

170. Ibid., pp. 56ff.

171. In reference to this cf. Domenico Losurdo, "La Révolution française a-t-elle échoué?" *La Pensée* 267 (1989): 85–93.

172. Schmitt, *Theorie des Partisanen*, p. 60.

173. Ernst Nolte, "War nicht der 'Archipel Gulag' ursprünglicher als Auschwitz?" in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 6, 1986.

*SEVEN*

# HEIDEGGER, THE SECOND THIRTY YEARS' WAR, AND THE CRITICISM OF MODERNITY

## 1. AN APOLITICAL PHILOSOPHER?

The debate regarding Heidegger and his relationship with Nazism is still unsettled, and it encompasses several unique aspects. Usually, the historian of philosophy tries to single out the interlocutors and the concrete targets of a certain position, and then tries to reconstruct the real historical framework, even for propositions that have the ambition of being valid *sub specie aeternitatis*. He does this not for the sake of historicist reductionism; on the contrary, his starting point is the awareness that even the excess of one theory with respect to its time cannot be grasped and evaluated without a preliminary attempt at historical clarification. In the case of this debate, however, many interpreters of Heidegger seem dominated by the opposite preoccupation: that of relegating all of his texts, even those in which the political dimension is explicit and declared, to a rarefied, politically aseptic sphere. In this way Heidegger, who not only in his letters and occasional speeches, but also in his theoretical writings, tirelessly comments upon the events of his time, is subjected to a purifying process that is supposed to cleanse him of any worldly contamination.

Heidegger's philosophical commentaries on the historical situation in which he lived include topics such as: the First World War; the crisis of the Weimar Republic and the last desperate attempts to save it; the Nazi rise to power, or at least the first acts carried out by the new regime with regard to domestic and foreign policy; the Spanish Civil War; the

outbreak and development of the Second World War, followed, interpreted, and reinterpreted, step-by-step, from Germany's initial dazzling victories, through to the difficulties that later emerge (the intervention of the United States, the war that gets held up in Eastern Europe and the change of direction after Stalingrad), and Germany's eventual defeat. After 1945, Heidegger discusses the expulsion of the Germans from the Eastern territories, the coming of the atomic bomb, the Berlin Blockade, and the Cold War. Throughout his career, he repeatedly and explicitly manifests his views on liberalism, democracy, socialism, Bolshevism, communism, and, of course, Nazism. He quotes Mussolini, Hitler, and Stalin. He makes reference to authors whose political interests are undeniably clear: Weber, Schmitt, Spengler, Jünger. And during the years of the Third Reich, he is involved in debates with various ideologists of the regime, he is attacked, praised, and even exalted by them.

In this light, the cleansing process that aims at purifying Heidegger of any political content becomes rather problematic, though evidently this is not considered a good enough reason to give up the attempt. Subtle linguistic devices come into play: Heidegger continually uses the term *völkisch*. We have chosen to leave the term in the original German, after pointing out the complexity of its meanings. Others proceed in a different manner: They translate it as "*populaire*" or "*nazional-popolare*."[1] Thus far, there is little or nothing to contest. After all, it is a difficult, even impossible, term to translate. One would expect, however, at least an explanatory note to draw the reader's attention to the fact that the term *völkisch* constitutes, at that historical moment, a *leitmotif* of National Socialism that, not by chance, entitles its official newspaper *Völkischer Beobachter*. Many interpreters blatantly disregard this detail, and thus contemplate the Heidegger of the rectorial period from a "popular" or "national-popular" point of view, that is, from a more or less Gramscian perspective. In this way, they create a barrier that separates Heidegger from the party and the regime that he solemnly supports. Yet, it is not difficult to realize the concrete political significance of this term: *Völkisch* is the term Hitler uses to define his vision of the world, and one needs only to skim through the analytical index of the standard edition of *Mein Kampf* to note that the expression *völkische Weltanschauung* is indicative of the philosophy of the party; not by chance it refers back to another entry, that of "National Socialism."[2] Even outside of the party, there are no doubts as to the political significance of the term we are discussing. When the generals who are fighting on the Russian front must explain to

their troops the peculiar characteristics of the ideological war and of the extermination to be carried out against Bolshevism, they limit themselves to declaring that all this has been dictated by the "*völkisch* ideal."[3] One can understand, then, why the German-Italian dictionaries of the time translate *völkisch* as "racist."[4] This is an imprecise translation, at least as far as Heidegger is concerned, but it should put an end to any attempt to purify a term that has been so clearly compromised on the political level. There is no equivalence between the term *völkisch* on the one hand, and "*populaire*" or "*nazional-popolare*" on the other. It would be preferable, and much less arbitrary, to translate it as "National Socialist."

In order to be complete, the purifying process promoted by the hermeneutists of innocence must act not only upon certain key terms, but also upon authors who exercise some kind of influence upon Heidegger. Heidegger himself, in an interview for "Der Spiegel," declares that, at the time of the Nazi rise to power, he assumed "a national, and above all, social position, similar to Friedrich Naumann's."[5] It is a credible assertion. The politician whom Heidegger mentions leaves a legacy that is discussed and claimed by opposing currents, and referred to at times in order to justify support for Nazism.[6] This is quite understandable: Naumann is deeply involved at the end of the nineteenth century in the anti-Semitic or anti-Judaic movement,[7] and thus he reveals some similarities with the "unforgettable Lueger" whom a young Heidegger speaks about.[8] Naumann's ambition is to create a "National-German Socialism,"[9] in contrast both to Marxism and to the "individualistic peoples" of the West, a socialism that is synonymous with "popular order," and within which the "new German man" feels at one with the community. The Germans have already demonstrated their unique ability to work "according to a common plan and with a common rhythm," the ability to fuse "their single egos into the ego of the community."[10] But this does not mean that the individual allows himself to be absorbed into the amorphous mass. On the contrary: "individualism is fully developed," but at the same time it is raised and transformed into a "communal way of being" (*gemeinschaftliche Daseinsweise*).[11] This ability to reconcile a respect for individuals in their uniqueness with the overpersonal community is one of the topoi of the *Kriegsideologie*, and we have encountered it in Heidegger as well.

Naumann is a notable representative of this "ideology of war," particularly with regard to the goals of Germany's foreign policy. After mocking, as usual, the ideal of perpetual peace, he theorizes, through the

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war—or rather, through wars that he sees as continuing well after the First World War (and for this reason, a strong increase in the birthrate is absolutely necessary)—the creation of a *Mitteleuropa* under German hegemony, "the core of which shall be German." This *Mitteleuropa*, this "central-European soul," which is already forming, will embody the best part of culture and civilization, in contrast to other developed countries and, above all, to the colonies;[12] with respect to the latter, Naumann recommends a policy free of moral scruples. To the German contingent of the international expedition sent to repress the Boxer Rebellion in China, Wilhelm II orders that no barbarian be taken prisoner, stating that Germany will teach them a lesson they will not forget for at least a thousand years. This arouses some dissent and preoccupation, but Naumann contributes to silencing these protests by pointing out the fact that one should not abandon oneself to an excessive "fastidiousness."[13]

To Naumann, a National-Liberal politician with strong *völkisch* tendencies, imperialistic expansion appears absolutely necessary in order to unite the national community. There is no sense, then, in talking about rights that belong "to man as man" ("rights emerge in the course of history"); the "internationalism of the old democracy," with its theory of the equality of all peoples and all individuals, is completely abstract and unrealistic: "trying to be more liberal than history itself is difficult." This teaches us that the essential thing to keep in mind is the distinction between "free peoples and non-free peoples." Freedom, therefore, means first of all "consanguineous government" (*blutsverwandt*), "direction given by the members of one's blood, one's lineage, or one's people" (*Führung durch Bluts- Stammes- oder Volksgenosse*).[14]

It is not necessary to insist on the turbid nature of this ideology, one that brought about such tragic consequences. It suffices to note that Naumann is introduced by the editor of the Italian edition of Heidegger's interview, *Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten*, as such: "In 1894 he founded the journal 'Die Hilfe' in order to oppose the Kaiser's unliberal measures. In 1895 he shared Max Weber's position, which asserted the need for 'socialism' to bear national responsibility. He established a close link between the defense of civil rights on the domestic front, and expansionism abroad."[15] Subsequently, the significance of Heidegger's reference to Naumann's "national, but above all, social position" (not his liberal ideas, whether they are true or only presumed) is lost. Yet, what has been eliminated might certainly prove useful to understanding the *völkisch* and organic *motifs* as well as the anti-Judaic

and anti-Semitic ones; it might clarify the theme, which we have defined as nominalistic, of "historicity" and the consequent negation of the universal concept of man; and finally, it might throw some light upon the exaltation of Germany as the "sacred heart" of the West and the "center" (*Mitte*) of Europe, or rather, to use Naumann's term, of *Mitteleuropa*. All of this precluded. In order to reinterpret Heidegger in nonpolitical terms, Naumann, whom Heidegger declares he somehow felt close to, must be ingeniously transfigured into a brave defender of man's rights!

One last characteristic of this cleansing process needs to be examined. With regard to texts with an explicit political content, such as the rectorial speech, many admit that Heidegger expresses support for Nazism, but then go on to claim that he does so on the basis of a misunderstanding, that is, without being fully conscious of his actions, and with Plato and classical Greece in mind rather than mundane contingencies. Accordingly, it is asserted that Heidegger uses the term *völkisch*, but that he ignores the fact that it has become a keyword of Nazism. Likewise, he is said to insist upon the theme of "struggle," but only in a purely philosophical sense, and in ignorance of the fact that all around him the same term is being used in an explicitly political context. According to this point of view, Heidegger never ceases to condemn the loss of *Bodenständigkeit* as a capital sin of modernity and of modern urban life, but he is completely blind to the fact that the exaltation of the *Boden* is a constitutive element of the Reich's ideology, or at least of one of its major currents. It is difficult to imagine a more severe and unjust argument than that which is presented by these would-be defense attorneys: One does not defend a great thinker by denying him the full possession of his faculties within the political realm, or by attributing a very limited consciousness to him. This is not the way to treat a philosopher whom one claims to revere.

In reality, the mission that they are trying to carry out is desperate and useless. For the most part, Heidegger's defenders are forced to confront Heidegger himself, whom they try to shield under the cover of pure theory, but who on many occasions underscores the political dimension of his theoretical categories, even those that are central to his philosophy. Heidegger, we noted above, establishes a link between the category of "historicity," which plays such an important part in *Sein und Zeit*, and the ideology of National Socialism. But even the category of nihilism is analyzed, discussed, and tied, throughout Heidegger's development, to democracy and Bolshevism, to world war, and eventually to Nazism itself.

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Habermas recently attempted to isolate a period or a chapter in Heidegger's intellectual biography, in which at last it would be possible to consider him a theoretician with no significant political or ideological implications. His attempt, however, lays itself open to objections similar to those we have illustrated so far. We noted the massive presence of the *Kriegsideologie* in *Sein und Zeit*, and even before 1929, the year that Habermas indicates as the date of Heidegger's fatal change of direction. Are we then trying to reduce Heidegger's masterpiece to a mere ideology? This is not our goal. Even Lukács's *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft*, though heavily influenced by the bitterness of the political and ideological clash of its time period, does not fail to give praise, though perhaps involuntarily, to *Sein und Zeit*.[16] Thus, not even Lukács reduces it to a mere ideology. The line that separates theory from ideology, however, is not as clear as Habermas suggests. There is no sense in superficially dismissing Heidegger's works written after 1929 (or 1933) as mere ideology (there are undoubtedly many philosophically fascinating pages even in those lectures which carry out a justification and a "metaphysical" transfiguration of the blitzkrieg and the "new order" imposed upon Europe by Hitler). By the same token, there is no sense in immersing *Sein und Zeit* in a sphere of purity. The line between theory and ideology is, so to speak, not horizontal but vertical, in the sense that it traverses the whole of Heidegger's work. And this criterion does not apply only to him.

## 2. Two Opposed Criticisms of Modernity

Whether one considers Heidegger throughout his development or at a specific time period, it is useless to insist on trying to separate him from politics: From the beginning, he is committed to denouncing modernity, and he is often the one who reveals or underscores the profound political implications of this condemnation. Actually, this is the starting point to understanding his encounter with Nazism. Certainly, criticism of modernity, which in Germany has a deeply rooted tradition, becomes widespread with the traumatic experience of the First World War. This has frequently been used as a point of departure in order to make various assimilations and parallelisms. But if one transcends the concrete historical or political content of the philosophical propositions examined, it is easy to get carried away in a game of analogies.

Even before the collapse of Nazism, Karl Löwith draws a comparison between Heidegger and Rosenzweig.[17] Both authors aim at destroying philosophical traditions and at constructing a radically new thought: Doesn't even Rosenzweig, a Jewish philosopher, declare that he intends to question "two and a half millennia" of philosophy and culture, from Parmenides to Hegel? Doesn't he, too, criticize tradition for losing sight of the centrality of individual existence and the experience of death?[18]

In reality, if we want to put some order to the proliferating criticisms of modernity that characterize Germany's cultural life, especially after the First World War, then we need to group these authors according to preliminary distinctions. First of all, we can isolate one large group: it is formed by those authors who see war as, in young Lukács's words, the era of "fulfilled sinfulness." As a consequence, they feel both the need and the obligation to question the world and the historical tradition that is behind, or that they think is behind, this devastating massacre. This state of mind is powerfully expressed, in the summer of 1915, by a Jewish interlocutor of young Lukács:

> War is a misleading term for describing how Europe is tearing itself to pieces. Is it anything different from the decline of the European world or from the sinister destiny which looms over us all? And in this community of pain, shouldn't a new feeling of brotherhood and love flourish among all of us who are subjugated to the machine of the State, of all States? Shouldn't this feeling once and for all destroy this machine?[19]

During the struggle against this world which is perceived as, and has actually become, intolerable, some, like Lukács and, in a different way, Bloch, place their hopes in the example set by the Bolshevik Revolution. Nonetheless, this political choice is accompanied by a utopian drive that is a product of the traumatic experience brought on by the First World War. Others, instead, resort to religious transcendence, or feel a stronger motivation to follow their vocation, and thus leave for Israel, where they seek an alternative to a world that is not only intolerable, but which has started to consider them more and more intolerable (this is Gershom Scholem's case).[20]

There is, however, another large group of these critics of modernity that consists of those who, despite all appearances, proceed in a direction that is diametrically opposed to the one examined above. For them, the era of fulfilled sinfulness is the very same one that the war is credited with having put an end to. It is an era characterized by "bourgeois security," the lack of "destiny," and the immersion into an opaque, mechanistic

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reality; it is also characterized by the repression of death, by leveling and standardization, and by uprooting and the loss of "historicity." As an alternative to all this, war provides new possibilities for achieving spiritual fullness and authenticity, two attributes that must not be lost for any reason, since they can and must constitute the starting point for questioning contemporary society and the history behind it. Thus, far from being regarded as the "era of fulfilled sinfulness," in this case war seems to emerge, to use a new, religious metaphor, as *plenitudo temporum*! Naturally, even in this case, given the lived experiences and interpretations of the war, there are different and contrasting currents (let us recall, for example, the contradiction between reactionary modernism, on the one hand, and the ideology of blood and soil, on the other).

However varied and complex the typology of the criticisms of modernity may appear, the distinction delineated above seems to hold valid. If, at least until 1945, Heidegger undoubtedly belongs to the second large group, Rosenzweig belongs, just as undoubtedly, to the first group. After being, in the beginning, somewhat of a patriotic enthusiast, Rosenzweig proceeds to radically criticize the world which he holds responsible or coresponsible for the enormous massacre. It is within this framework that we must place, as we have attempted to demonstrate (cf. *supra*, chap. 4, § 3), *Der Stern der Erlösung*. It is true that Rosenzweig highlights the centrality of individual existence and the experience of death, but he does so, even though he is not completely aware of it, from a point of view that is in opposition to Heidegger's. The "fear of death" that he speaks about and upon which he insists[21] is not to be confused with that "anxiety" which, in *Sein und Zeit*, is characteristic of a "resolute" *Dasein* "that knows no fear," and certainly not "cowardly fear" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 8). When Rosenzweig calls for philosophy to "no longer be deaf to the cry of frightened humanity," he not only has in mind the experience of the war, but he has it in mind precisely from the point of view of the impersonal "they," that *Man* which Heidegger condemns as inauthentic and cowardly. The following statement made by Rosenzweig, instead, is a criticism which clearly targets the *Kriegsideologie*: "The philosophy which exalts death as its favorite option and as the noble occasion for escaping from life's distress, only seems to try and fool man. Man senses only too well that he is condemned to death, but not to suicide."[22] It would be impossible to find anything similar in Heidegger, since *Der Stern der Erlösung* sometimes seems to represent a sort of anticipated criticism of his philosophy, or at least some of its aspects.

Yes, Rosenzweig insists on the centrality of individual existence, but in opposition to a universal that is not very different from that "Moloch" which young Lukács was afraid of being swallowed by during the war.[23] While Heidegger juxtaposes faith in "historicity" to any universal, Rosenzweig, instead, despite his unique tie to the *Blutgemeinschaft* of the Jews, a people that has been persecuted and discriminated against, not only sides with humanity and "frightened humanity," but also exalts the Torah because it "releases people from any temporality and historicity of life."[24] Both Rosenzweig and Buber criticize any attachment to the "soil," the *Boden*; but it is precisely in the name of *Bodenständigkeit* that Heidegger, in 1929, warns of the danger imposed by the "Judaization" of "*German* spiritual life" (cf. *supra*, chap. 4, § 4).

## 3. HORKHEIMER, ADORNO, AND THE DIALECTIC OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Criticism of modernity, sometimes bitter criticism, can be found in authors such as Horkheimer and Adorno who, for this reason, have often been compared to Heidegger. This parallelism is rather questionable, however, and not only due to their positions with regard to Nazism. Let us examine *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, the work that most harshly expresses the antimodernist sentiment of the Frankfurt school: Despite appearances, this is not a rejection of the Enlightenment and of modernity in and of themselves. Horkheimer and Adorno passionately highlight the coexistence of contradictory aspects in the development of the modern world: "The condemnation of superstition has always meant, together with the progress of domination, the unmasking of domination itself. . . . The progress of civilization has renovated, by way of dominion, even the possibility of placating it."[25] Here, the theory regarding the ruinous course of the West that originated in Plato's Greece is nowhere to be found! Instead, that theory is explicitly criticized: "today's archaics"—this is a clear allusion to the Nazi ideologists who are still busy justifying a collapsing regime in the name of the revolution against the modern world—do not realize that "universal history and the Enlightenment" are basically "the same thing. The current trendy ideology, which makes the rejection of the Enlightenment its main goal, ends up paying an involuntary tribute to it. It is forced to acknowledge, even in the most remote history, the presence of enlightened thought."[26]

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The attempt to go back to a pre-Enlightenment era is an expression not only of quixotic velleity, but also of reactionary mythology. Any attempt to eliminate the influence of the Enlightenment has the function of burying freedom: "We have no doubts—and this is our creed—that the freedom of society is inseparable from enlightened thought." Thus, the latter must be liberated of those aspects which characterize "the seed of the current, widespread regression."[27] The criticism made here is not a rejection of the Enlightenment; rather, it sometimes presents itself as a sort of self-criticism on the part of those who do not intend to abandon its ideas. The Enlightenment is therefore called upon to "gain self-awareness, in order to prevent men from being completely betrayed."[28] In other words, to avoid extirpating the good with the bad, "reflection upon the destructive aspect of progress [must not be] left to its enemies."[29]

Certainly, the extent to which the two authors of *Dialektik der Aufklärung* succeed in coherently accomplishing the theoretical plan that they have formulated must still be assessed. And yet, its very formulation should be enough to dissuade against the temptation to indulge in presumptuous parallelisms. In order to understand this text, it might perhaps be useful to address Marx's distinction between two opposed criticisms of ideology: The first one, a progressive or revolutionary criticism, "wrenches imaginary flowers from the chains, not so that man will bear chains deprived of ornament or consolation, but so that he will throw away the chains and gather live flowers"; the second one, expressed by the traditional school of law so dear to those who defend the *Ancien Régime*, serfdom and even slavery, "destroys the *fake flowers* which decorate the chains, so that we can wear *authentic chains* with no flowers." As Marx observes, the representatives of this second type of criticism place themselves, or presume to place themselves, within the sphere of the Enlightenment. They flaunt a "method which respects" no one, they support not a fideistic, but a skeptical position, and they try to deploy the methodology that they have inherited from "*other Enlightenment figures*," against reason and in defense of the *Ancien Régime*. Thus they too are, in their own way, representatives of the Enlightenment, which in this manner has come to signify its antithesis.[30]

Horkheimer and Adorno's text can be considered a long commentary on Marx. The ambivalence of the German word *Aufklärung* must be kept in mind: It refers not only to the specific historical period which is generally called the Enlightenment, but also to the lights themselves, to rational illumination, the criticism of prejudice, and somehow even the criticism of

ideology. In this sense, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* is the dialectic of the criticism of ideology and the disenchantment characteristic of the modern world. This disenchantment is absolutely necessary, but in and of itself it is not enough to guarantee emancipation. One case in point is Nazism which, a distant follower of the traditional school of law that Marx condemns, takes on some "enlightened" tones and positions. As a result, Nazism condemns universal values as prejudices or mystifications, and it submits not only Christianity, but also its secularized versions, that is, liberalism, democracy and socialism, to a sort of criticism of ideology.

In this sense, "today's archaics" (among whom Horkheimer and Adorno might have included Heidegger himself) "bring about" that *Aufklärung* which they "meant to crush."[31] And what they bring about are the worst aspects of the *Aufklärung*, thus depriving it of the possibility for emancipation. The authors who are being examined here express opposing positions not only with regard to political modernity, but also with respect to the denunciation of the unfortunate consequences that are the result of the predominance of calculative thought. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, this domination makes "pleasure" impossible, and it condemns numerous people to be "mutilated by dominion."[32] It is hard to imagine a sharper contrast to Heidegger who, in line with Nietzsche, perceives the ideal of happiness for the greatest number as the most extreme example of the modern world's degradation and standardization, a sign of the repulsive "last man's" coming.

The theme of happiness or pleasure leads us immediately to the theme of the French Revolution. In *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, Horkheimer and Adorno are fully aware of this:

> Liberalism granted the Jews the right to own property, but not the authority to command. It was the aim of man's rights to promise happiness even where there is no power. But since the betrayed masses sense that this universal promise remains a lie as long as social classes exist, they grow furious, and feel as though they have been made fools of.[33]

Here the subject is liberalism, but what is really meant is the French Revolution (and its moderate conclusion), now the object of the same criticism that had previously been expressed by Marx: man's rights remain an abstraction, and they will not fulfill the promise of happiness and freedom for a class "mutilated by domination" until they directly influence economic power relationships. A few years earlier, Horkheimer, after having passionately discussed the "great illumination" that

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permits Saint-Just to exalt "happiness" as a "new idea in Europe," comments upon the Jacobin leader's fall as such: "After Thermidor, the order of the day was no longer happiness, but rather a lawless terror which knew no bounds."[34] Thus, even though Horkheimer and Adorno criticize the French Revolution, they still regard it as a milestone in history, and declare its highest moment to be the formulation of the idea of happiness. This same idea of happiness is, instead, despised first by the *Kriegsideologie*'s theoreticians, and then by Heidegger as well.

Certainly, some aspects of the criticism are diverse, sometimes even in contrast to what we have examined thus far: one major example is the denunciation of the Enlightenment, not only as "totalitarian," but even as "more totalitarian than any other system."[35] Such a drastic condemnation cannot help but to implicate the French Revolution, and thus cast a shadow upon modernity as a whole. Therefore, it would be legitimate to make an analogy to Heidegger, an analogy that should not be underestimated, since even some liberal authors warn of the alleged totalitarianism evident in the Enlightenment and some of its supporters.[36]

Horkheimer and Adorno's criticism of ideology is marred by the ambiguity that envelops the statute that they ascribe to the category of universality. Is the criticism of ideology the denunciation of the illegitimate and surreptitious transfiguration of the singlular in terms of universality, or is it the rejection of universality in and of itself? And how must the catastrophe that culminated in Auschwitz be assessed? Adorno, in particular, does not seem to be fully aware of the fact that this catastrophe is, as has been shown in this text and elsewhere,[37] the result of the progressive destruction of the universal concept of man. In reality, even an illusory, false, and deceitful universal has some control over violence in its most brutal form. The most reactionary ideology is that which destroys, to use Marx's terms, the illusory flowers so as to strenghten the chains, chains that may then be used openly, without any tricks and limitations, at least to some extent, even by those imaginary and deceitful flowers. This is the reason why Nazism had to reject the category of universality. The fact is that Adorno himself seems sometimes to indulge in that "ultra-nominalistic" rhetoric for which, elsewhere, he reproaches Vilfredo Pareto (who, not by chance, is Mussolini's primary influence, or at least one of his primary influences).[38] And certainly, the more he indulges the temptation to reject the category of universality, the closer he gets, with regard to his conceptual apparatus, to the author whom, in another respect, he bitterly criticizes: Heidegger.[39]

The contrast between Horkheimer and Adorno, on the one hand, and Heidegger, on the other, reemerges in reference to a fundamental issue. The text to be examined is once again *Dialektik der Aufklärung*. A society that is unable to attain happiness, or that openly rejects even the idea of it, cannot help but resort to the rhetoric of sacrifice—one of the main themes of the *Kriegsideologie*, and of Heidegger. *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, published before the end of the Second World War, confronts an ideology that stems from the first conflict, but that is nonetheless considered valid in Germany up until her final defeat. Horkheimer and Adorno bitterly criticize this theme of sacrifice, "exalted by trendy irrationalists [and] inseparable from the deification of the victim, and the deceitful, priestly rationalization of murder, thanks to the apotheosis of the chosen ones."[40] What is most significant is that the rhetoric of sacrifice, this category so dear to Heidegger, is now an expression of the predominance of calculative thought and the *leitmotif* of its history: "The history of civilization is the history of the introversion of sacrifice. In other words, it is the history of renunciation."[41]

This history of renunciation is strictly linked to the history of violent repression: "In the past, only the poor and savages were subject to unleashed capitalistic forces"; only later did "totalitarian order" swallow up the whole of society.[42] The stages that precede Nazism and the indescribable massacre of Auschwitz here refer to the violence perpetrated by the great European powers against the colonized peoples, as well as the violence committed, in the very heart of the West, against the poor and the outcasts locked in "work houses" that seem to anticipate what will later become concentration camps.[43] Reflections like these are completely absent in Heidegger's work. This is because his interpretation of political modernity is completely different: His condemnation encompasses democracy and the struggle for man's rights, even for the classes and populations that, according to Heidegger and Adorno, are the first sacrificial victims of the violence that later culminates in Auschwitz. From this perspective, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* is also a self-criticism of the West, part of a tradition that dates back to Las Casas, but to which Marx himself belongs. Marx denounces the slave trade as one of the "idyllic processes" that accompany the primal accumulation of capitalism.[44] Once again, the difference with respect to Heidegger is sharp and unmistakable: In his work, the theme of the crisis of the West is never a self-criticism of the violence perpetrated by the West upon colonized peoples, or upon those branded by the Nazis as "undermen." Under the category of calculative

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thought or the predominance of quantity, Heidegger includes democracy and, within Europe or at an international level, the coming of the masses. And, against these masses, some disciplinary or controlling measure might well be justified or beneficial, even if one has to resort to an "organization" that is itself contaminated by calculative thought!

## 4. Husserl, Modernity, and the Enlightenment

Husserl's case is different: he, too, is influenced by the *Kriegsideologie*, but to a far lesser degree than his disciple. The condemnation of the "ideas of 1789" does not seem to act upon this impassioned reader of Descartes, not even during the conflict, when nationalistic sentiment is most fervent. This theme is completely absent after the war as well. It may be useful to refer to a passage from *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, in which Husserl regards "the long-defamed age of the Enlightenment" as "worthy of reverence."[45] As one can see, the condemnation of modern objectivism does not entail a condemnation of political modernity or that current of thought "so defamed, during the First World War and especially during the years of Nazism, for having been an integral part of the ideological preparation for the French Revolution." Husserl vigorously underscores the Enlightenment's progressive political implications as the apex in the evolution of modernity. This development originates from that "great movement for freedom" constituted by the Renaissance (which, in turn, explicitly intends to recover the "ancient spirit of humanity's free culture" typical of the Greeks);[46] it continues with the struggle against "traditionalism" carried out by Protestantism;[47] and, thanks to Descartes, it finally results in the "epoch in which humanity wakes up to autonomy," that is, the present.[48] With modernity, what arises and asserts itself is the "new cultural principle of freedom, in particular, a freedom which begins with scientific reason"; with the Enlightenment, "a new era of humanity" begins,[49] an era " 'dominated' by the spirit of autonomous reason."[50] Husserl clearly moves away from the "trendy *Kulturkritik* of the present" and unhesitatingly condemns "irrationalism, so popular these days."[51] Not by chance, he cites the most critical point in the history of modernity as the nineteenth century, a century that witnesses the rise of an intolerant and aggressive nationalism.[52]

The contrast between Husserl and Heidegger is sharp, even in reference

to their interpretations of Hellenism. Husserl, whose position is questionable on a historiographical level, but significant and prominent on a political level, exalts Hellenism as synonymous with the critical spirit and the autonomy of reason, and thus, in the final analysis, as a stage in the evolution of modernity: "European culture has revealed, in the modern era, its fundamental character, which has derived from Greek philosophy. In its most profound significance, European culture is, or wants to be, a *culture which begins with autonomous reason*, exclusively with autonomous reason."[53] With respect to this, the idea of philosophy that Husserl supports, and invites others to support, is perceived "in our Greco-European sense."[54]

In this case, too, one must avoid hasty parallelisms, all the more so given the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger with regard to the central theme of the category of "historicity." Above all, the distinction between their two opposed criticisms of modernity must still be held valid. After an initial nationalistic intoxication, Husserl comes to regard the conflict that had torn Europe apart as a catastrophe.[55] This, and the subsequent bitter experience of the Nazi rise to power are the starting points for his criticism of modernity. His assertion, that "the mere sciences of facts create mere *de facto* men," sounds like a bitter assessment.[56] Accordingly, the victory of Nazism cannot be comprehended without the epistemological decapitation, carried out by Weber, of the discourse concerning values. And this decapitation, in turn, appears to be the result of the progressive rise and affirmation of objectivizing and positivistic tendencies within modern and contemporary science.

One should note that here Husserl's criticism of Weber is diametrically opposed to the criticism expressed by Heidegger. On the one hand, Heidegger denounces the category of value neutrality because it presumes to circumscribe a space removed from the conflict, one that transcends any singular historicity, and is characterized by scientific universality and "so-called liberal objectivity" (cf. *supra*, chap. 2, § 7). On the other hand, Husserl charges the very same category with arbitrarily shrinking the sphere of universality and objectivity. From this sphere, the discourse concerning values is excluded, with disastrous political consequences. With regard to this, Horkheimer and Adorno hold an analogous position; making explicit reference to the text of *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, they consider positivism to be responsible for the "tame demeanor with which reason submits to what is merely given," "to what is *de facto*," "to what exists *de facto*." In this way, "thought becomes level with the world," and "stepping out of the magic circle of reality is—for the scientific spirit—folly and self-destruction."[57]

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This assessment could, of course, be questioned. But one cannot deny the fact that Husserl's position is characterized to the very end by the pathos of "universal *ratio*"[58] and by the ambition, which sometimes appears desperate, to widen the boundaries of reason beyond positivistic taboos. This would permit a rational or reasonable foundation of values; it would put an end to the nihilism that was the rationale behind Nazism's victory; and it would recover, against Nazism itself, the essence of modernity.

## 5. Heidegger, Croce, Gentile, and Liberalism

Heidegger's case is likewise notably different from that of Croce, or even Gentile. Croce takes part in the exaltation of the patriotic community of war, and in the criticism of the "ideas of 1789" (two central themes of the *Kriegsideologie*). One can then understand his sympathy for the disciplinary and ordering function aimed at controlling the socialist and communist movements (which, even before the First World War, were accused of undermining the "consciousness of social unity"). And equally evident is his approval of the action, directed at strengthening existing sociopolitical relationships, carried out by fascism and its lousy gangs. Recourse is even given to that "rain of blows" that, in Croce's opinion, might be considered, "in some cases, usefully and appropriately administered."[59] Still, even during this phase, criticism of the "ideas of 1789" is undoubtedly directed toward a central event in modern and contemporary history; it is not aimed at liberal tradition or modernity in and of themselves, and even less so at two millennia of Western history. For this reason, the function that Croce attributes to fascism is rigorously limited: he regards it as a sort of supplementary police force with the task of guaranteeing order and ensuring the return to the *status quo ante* the liberal state. On the other hand, the support of a *coup d'état* aimed at preserving and stabilizing sociopolitical relationships has renowned antecedents within the liberal tradition: Napoleon Bonaparte's Eighteenth Brumaire has not only the explicit support of Siéyès, but also that of, at least in the beginning, Benjamin Constant, Madame de Staël, and liberal circles in general.[60] The subsequent disillusionment experienced within these circles corresponds to the disappointment experienced by Croce.

As for Gentile, his exaltation of the community goes well beyond the patriotic mobilization indispensable to the war and to the struggle against socialism and communism. The tone that characterizes his celebration is all-encompassing: He calls for the respect of religion, tradition, and native customs. Not by chance, his criticism of modernity attacks not only the French Revolution, but the Protestant Reformation itself, which, with its appeal to the freedom of conscience, is guilty of making "religion a private business," thus corroding and dissolving, in a ruinous way, the community's unity.[61] It is for this reason, too, that Gentile remains faithful, up to his tragic death, to fascism, despite the fact that he had initially embraced it by explicitly professing himself a liberal:

> Being a liberal by profound and solid belief—he writes to Mussolini in a letter dated May 31, 1923, in which he announces his decision to support the Fascist Party—I had to realize that today liberalism as perceived by myself and by the men who belonged to the glorious Right-wing which led Italy to the Risorgimento, the liberalism of freedom in the law and thus in a strong State, a State conceived as an ethical reality, is not represented in Italy by the liberals who are more or less openly against you, but precisely by you. And therefore . . . an authentic liberal who scorns misunderstandings and who loves to keep his own place, must side with you.

Once he makes it clear that it is time to put an end to the "democratic liberalism of today's liberals" and to purify classic liberalism of its democratic contamination, Gentile may affirm—this time to a friend of his—that "calling oneself a liberal . . . is to me the same thing as calling oneself a fascist."[62]

Heidegger's point of departure is very different. On the one hand, Gentile defends fascism by calling it liberal according to what he regards as the most authentic and profound meaning of the term. Croce, on the other hand, after expressing an initial sympathy for this political movement, later criticizes it for failing to fulfill the hope for a restoration of the old liberal state. Heidegger, instead, expects a far more radical regeneration from Nazism, a regeneration that presupposes the questioning of millennia of history. And he soon begins to criticize it, though within a permanently loyalist position, because the party, the regime and its ideologists, and Rosenberg above all, cannot manage to rid themselves of the remnants of "liberalism."

## 6. Liberal Tradition and the Criticism of Modernity

Harsh criticism and the complete rejection of modernity are rife in the German culture of the twentieth century, and they belong to an established tradition. Yet, one must avoid the widespread tendency to schematically juxtapose Germany to the liberal-democratic West. The former is identified and denounced as the birthplace of the rejection of the modern world, a rejection that acquires, from time to time, diverse ideological justifications, but it is so generalized that authors as far apart as Heidegger, Husserl, Lukács, Horkheimer, Adorno (and Marx himself) are all swallowed up by it. Instead, the Anglo-Saxon world is exalted as the home of unfailing, and just as generalized, support for the values of political and scientific modernity.[63] Many aspects of this tendency to compare Germany to the liberal-democratic West have already been criticized, though one of them still remains to be examined: the aspect regarding the relationships and links between liberal tradition and conservative or reactionary *Kulturkritik*.

This *Kulturkritik* develops particularly in Germany, but at the same time it refers to the history of the countries that lie west of it. The *Kriegsideologie* is strongly influenced, as we have seen, by Burke. When Sombart exalts him as "anti-British" and as really German, his assertion is in line with reactionary romanticism, which had similarly celebrated the British politician and statesman. An example of this reactionary romanticism is constituted by Adam Müller, according to whom "the most important epoch in the development of the German science of the State was the introduction, into the German domain, of Edmund Burke, the greatest statesman, the most profound, most powerful, most human, and most belligerent of all times and peoples." He is "a spirit of German sentiments." And Müller adds: "I say this proudly: he belongs more to us than to the British."[64]

Müller was right to underscore the influence of the British author upon Germany. The term *Gemeinschaft*, for instance, which designates a fundamental category of German antimodernist tradition and of the *Kriegsideologie*, is simply Friedrich von Gentz's translation of the "partnership" theorized and exalted by Burke. This translation is all but arbitrary. In his harsh polemic against French revolutionaries, Burke insists on the fact that, even though society is a "contract," it is a contract of an absolutely unique kind. It cannot be altered or violated with radical

legislative innovations or interventions which might question the "partnership," the "community [that] binds together not only the living, but the living, the dead and the unborn." This partnership "deals with very different needs than those pertaining to the animal interests of an ephemeral and corruptible nature." This partnership "eternally ties society to its origins; it links the lowest natures to the highest ones; it connects the visible world to the invisible, according to an immutable pact sanctioned by the inviolable commitment which binds together all physical and moral natures, each in its appointed place."[65]

There is no doubt: it is the very same *Gemeinschaft* that will later be so dear to the theoreticians of antimodern *Kulturkritik*. The first theorization of "community," bathed in a sacred aura, is formulated in England, in contrast to the society that was made a guinea pig for the experiments and innovative restlessness of French revolutionaries. Not by chance, Burke exalts not only the bond of tradition, but the "wisdom of our ancestors,"[66] and the "wise prejudice" through which the sociopolitical institutions and the community one lives in come to be regarded as something "consecrated" and worthy of "reverence," an organic body where one's forefathers and ancestors are still living. One must therefore flee in "horror" from those hasty revolutionaries and reformers who are "too eager to chop the body of their old father into pieces and put it in the wizard's cauldron in the hope that poisonous herbs and strange spells might restore his health and vigor." This is the first coherent and well-articulated exaltation of organicism, and a condemnation of individualism: One must prevent hasty changes and ruinous doctrines from "pulverizing" the community "into the dust and crushed stone of individuality, which fall easy prey to all winds."[67]

Burke also introduces another important *motif* that can be paired up with that of the "community": the exaltation, in contrast to the city, of the countryside and the "agricultural class, the class least disposed to rebellion."[68] This theme will later become very popular in the liberal tradition (one only needs to recall Constant's condemnation of the "artisans crowded in the cities," or George Washington's desire that his fellow citizens remain attached to the soil, instead of becoming a "manufacturing people").[69] From the liberal tradition, this theme will evolve into the conservative and reactionary *Kulturkritik*.

One more theme presented by Burke is the nostalgic idolization of the good old times, the age of "ancient chivalry." Judging by the French Revolution, this age is unfortunately "over, dethroned by the era of the

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sophists, economists and calculators; and with it, the glory of Europe has passed away for good."[70] These words are somehow reminiscent of what will later be the criticism of calculative thought.

A few years later, Friedrich Schlegel will denounce the prosaicness of his time, the politics and life of which are "mechanical and founded upon charts and statistics."[71] And Schlegel is a fervent admirer of the "great Englishman, Burke," whom he credits with reevaluating that which "is historical and divinely positive." Schlegel also praises him for unmasking the "empty theories" and "revolutionary errors" that reduce the state to a leveling and oppressive "legislative machine," and that install "mechanical" relationships everywhere, thus trampling upon all that is "personal," "living," and "organic."[72] The political world that stems from the French Revolution, that is, the modern world, begins to be perceived as mechanical. This term is beloved by Burke, a bitter enemy of that "mechanical philosophy" which was the origin of the catastrophe that occurred in France, a catastrophe that threatened all of Europe.[73] Burke's condemnation of his own epoch is at times so radical that, inflamed by the events that take place in France during the revolution, he does not hesitate to define it as "the least enlightened age of all, the least qualified to lay down the law since civilized society was first formed."[74]

It is only by taking Burke's enormous influence into account that the history of *Kulturkritik* in Germany can be fully understood. There is nothing strange about this: Burke comes from a country engaged in a mortal struggle against revolutionary and Napoleonic France, and at the same time he fears the possibility of uprisings even within England. In "his immortal book on the French Revolution,"—this definition refers back, and not by chance, to another central figure in German conservatism[75]—he provides the first model for criticism of the Revolution, and prepares the weapons and theoretical arsenal that will later be utilized by other countries as well, during the struggles against other revolutions. Thus, besides introducing the above-mentioned *motifs*, Edmund Burke condemns the abstractness of man's universal rights (to which he juxtaposes the concreteness of England's unique tradition or, one could say, historicity). In addition to that, he denounces uprooted intellectuals, and presents the revolution as a conspiracy, a conspiracy that is for the most part Judaic.[76]

The starting point of German antimodernism is personified by the British Whig who, at the same time, continues to be exalted and largely admired by authors who support neo-laissez-faire.[77] And these authors are

likewise critical of modernity, not only political modernity, but also certain aspects of scientific modernity. This is the case with Friedrich August von Hayek, who dates the beginning of Europe's or the West's political decline as starting from at least the middle of the last century.[78] He ascribes this decline to the "abuse of reason," "modern hubris," and "intellectual hubris" that is the disease of "rationalism, or better, intellectualism,"[79] "constructivist rationalism," or "construction" *tout court*.[80] Heidegger denounces the hubris of which modern man is guilty with respect to reality, both historical and natural. Hayek, instead, denounces it only with reference to its first aspect: What he finds intolerable is the ambition, typical of the Enlightenment and its followers, of revolutionaries and of radical reformers, to reduce society to an object that can be manipulated at will. Among the main figures responsible for this, Hayek includes "Francis Bacon, the Lord Chancellor, who will forever remain the prototype of the 'demagogue of science,' as he has justly been called,"[81] but above all Descartes. At a certain point, Hayek wonders whether it would be appropriate to add "Plato" himself to the list,[82] since he is suspected of intellectualistic arrogance and the worship of reason that is so ruinously triumphant in the modern era. Not by chance, Plato constitutes the starting point of Heidegger's merciless questioning of Western history as a whole.

In Hayek's opinion, the main culprit remains Descartes, who was "simply disastrous."[83] Above all, he is guilty of laying the foundation for the rationalistic tradition that culminates in the Enlightenment and in the French Revolution, and for spreading "contempt for tradition, custom and history in general."[84] Once again, what comes to mind is the cult of "historicity," which is so popular in twentieth-century Germany. Through several transformations and mediations, this cult continues to manifest itself even today, in Hans-Georg Gadamer's speech: in it, Heidegger's disciple attempts to reevaluate "tradition," "authority" and "prejudice," which are unjustly discredited by "modern Enlightenment." In developing his reevaluation, Gadamer refers back to Burke,[85] an author admired also by Hayek. And Hayek, in turn, insists on the enormous "benefits" that derive from the "usages of our society," and vigorously reevaluates the "much derided idea of the 'wisdom of our ancestors' embodied in inherited institutions."[86] The expression in quotation marks makes immediate reference to Burke who, in defending tradition from enlightened and revolutionary attacks, mentions the superior "practical politics of Ancient Times" and, in particular, Aristotle.[87] The latter is one of Gadamer's constant reference points:

> The superiority of ancient ethics over modern moral philosophy is also characterized by the fact that, for the former, it is precisely the unavoidability of tradition which marks the passage from ethics to "politics," the art of making good laws. Modern Enlightenment, instead, holds an abstract and revolutionary position with regards to this.[88]

Once again, what emerges is the harsh criticism of modernity that brings together Heidegger's disciple and the theoretician of neo-laissez-faire.

The reference to Burke as a defender of historical tradition and its uniqueness, and as an opponent of enlightened and revolutionary subversion, also entails the criticism of universalism. Hayek sarcastically comments upon the concept of "universal rights," which supposedly belong to all men and thus, it seems, even "to the Eskimo, and presumably to the Abominable Snowman."[89] In Germany, in between the two wars, the "Eskimo," the "Hottentot," and the "Papuan" had been contrasted to "Western man" by authors who were very far apart, yet united by the emphasis they placed upon German or Western "historicity" (cf. *supra*, chap. 3, § 9). And, together with the irony regarding the Eskimo, Hayek introduces once again the pathos of "Western man."[90] As for Gadamer, his insistence on the value of the unique tradition and ethos of a historically determined community goes hand-in-hand with the polemic against the "universal ethics of responsibility" so dear to Karl-Otto Apel. Even to Heidegger's disciple, the universalistic presumption cannot but appear as an expression of the hubris characteristic of modern intellectuals and followers of the Enlightenment. The link between the criticism of modernity and the criticism of universalism is also a *leitmotif* of the *Kulturkritik* that develops in Germany between the two wars.

An example that might serve to further demonstrate the link between the criticism of modernity and liberal tradition is constituted by Leo Strauss. Despite being a great admirer of American liberal tradition, Strauss constantly denounces the ruinous "three surges of modernity," which eventually result in Nazism and communism; the only way to avoid modernity is to seek refuge in the wisdom and virtue of classical antiquity.[91]

# 7. RADICAL ANTIMODERNISM AND NONACTUALITY: NIETZSCHE AND HEIDEGGER

In order to avoid any arbitrary simplification, it is essential to keep in mind the fact that, during the twentieth century, the most diverse critiques of modernity flourish both in Germany and elsewhere. While underscoring the complexity of this historical framework, however, one must not give in to ineffability or renounce making the necessary distinctions. Heidegger's denunciation of political modernity is not limited to socialism and democracy, but it also attacks the liberal tradition so dear to Hayek and, though in a different way, to Leo Strauss.

With respect to this, what emerges is an undeniable continuity in the development of Heidegger's thought. The Catholicism of his early years is characterized by an antimodernism that aims at condemning "our time" and the "modern conception of life." The latter is considered shallow, always thirsting for novelties, attached to all that is ephemeral, and consequently dangerous to the "well-being of the people's body and soul." His denunciation of the ruinous nature of the modern individual's uprooting is so radical that it cannot be compared to any of the criticisms of modernity considered thus far. Moreover, this denunciation reveals itself from the start as something other than a mere giving in to indolent nostalgia. One must aim for the future, without losing sight of the past (*rückwärtsblickend vorwärtsschauen*).[92] This text is reminiscent of a passage in the rectorial speech that, after indicating and exalting Hellenism as the beginning of Western history, continues as such: "The beginning is still with us. It does not lie behind us as a past which is by now far away, but it is still before us."[93] What explains Heidegger's encounter with Nazism is the combination of an extremely radical denunciation of scientific and political modernity and a fervent desire for an event that will restore primal greatness. From the beginning, Heidegger's antimodernism is aimed at the future, and thus it has a political tension that can well explain his subsequent attempt to contribute to the complete transformation of Germany and Europe.

During the First World War, Heidegger resumes his polemic directed against an "essential characteristic of the modern world . . . the liberation of the subject from his ties to the surrounding world, his obsession with his own individual life." Life in the Middle Ages presented itself in a very different way: "The sense of ties [*Gebundenheit*] did not stand for

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a lack of freedom or a subordinate position, but for a unitary orientation of spiritual life."[94] Modern freedom only signifies a lack of roots and foundations: This theme strongly recurs in the following years, for example in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie.*

A later development in Heidegger's thought entails the subsumption, under the category of modernity, of Christianity itself. The latter is now accused of being the first cause of those movements (liberalism, democracy, socialism) that Heidegger continues to condemn. During the last phase of Heidegger's development, Nietzsche himself and finally even Nazism as a whole are subsumed under the category of modernity.

Given Heidegger's antimodernism, so constantly and firmly antidemocratic and antiliberal, his encounter with Nazism cannot possibly be considered a mere accident. This encounter, however, was destined to deteriorate because of the very extreme radicalism which characterized Heidegger's antimodernism. In contempt of half-measures, this radical criticism encompassed millennia of history, and had the ambition of accomplishing the desired regeneration through a direct link to the pre-Socratic philosophers. No political movement could rise to this level of radicalism which has several utopian traits, despite the fact that this utopia has a clearly regressive character.

From this perspective, the history of Heidegger's development reveals many points in common with Nietzsche's.[95] Nietzsche leaves no doubt as to the real significance of his political position: It is a form of "aristocratic radicalism" (*aristokratischer Radikalismus*).[96] But his radicalism is so extreme that it goes as far as to condemn even Bismarck and the Second Reich because they are too prone "to mediocrity, democracy, and 'modern ideas.' "[97] It is this displacement from the actual political development, this programmatic "non-actuality" that suggests the idea of Nietzsche as a nonpolitical figure: In this way, the road lies open to all kinds of "re-readings." Nietzsche obsessively insists that there can be no civilization without slavery: Only slavery liberates the restricted ruling class from the curse of labor and the division of labor; only slavery guarantees that *otium* that is the indispensable condition for the production of authentic culture, untainted by the shame of utilitarian and banausic considerations. At this point, one only needs to interpret this discourse on slavery as a simple metaphor, completely separate from the concrete political debate that was being carried out on an international level, and which had been rekindled by the American Civil War and colonial conquests. In other words, one only needs to consider Nietzsche in the same

way that one considers Heidegger, denying him the full possession of his faculties within the political realm. One only needs to cover up or eliminate the reference to slavery (the strictest and harshest division of labor), and the philosopher who explicitly affirms the unavoidability of the division of labor miraculously rises to become a critic of that very same division of labor, and of the intellectual mutilation that it entails. In the final analysis, Nietzsche becomes a theoretician of emancipation.

Another possibility: Nietzsche declares that he does not want to have anything to do with modern individualism and its egalitarian implications. To all this he prefers "hierarchy" (*Rangordnung*), because it is only through hierarchy that the full deployment of individual capabilities within the restricted ruling class is made possible. Even in this case it is not difficult to transform the philosopher, by means of suitable cuts and silences, into a prophet of individualism. An analogous operation may be performed with regard to his criticism of religion and above all Christianity, which Nietzsche denounces as the main cause of the slaves' democratic and socialist revolt. Nietzsche intends to carry out this criticism to the very end, but not to the point of jeopardizing the comforting, sedative efficacy that religion can and must have on those masses condemned to slavery. Not to the point of upsetting the sleepy tranquility of those who, through their sacrifice, promote the development of society. Even this theme can be assimilated only partially, and it is not difficult to imagine which parts must be discarded in order to turn Nietzsche into a sort of modern follower of the Enlightenment. Finally, one only needs to forget about the pathos of the "life of the species," the "great economy of the Whole," the civilization that demands the sacrifice of innumerable slaves and condemns "compassion" as useless and harmful. One only needs to forget about all this, and Nietzsche is once and for all transformed into a relentless critic of false universals and suffocating totalities, a demystifier of every philosophy of history and, in the final analysis, a prophet of postmodernism. The antimodernism characterized by "aristocratic radicalism" has been turned into a tolerant, even liberal, postmodernism.

Something analogous happens to Heidegger. Following Nietzsche's trail, he develops what could be defined as a radical antimodernism, which is inevitably displaced from the actual political development. On the one hand, Nietzsche can never fully recognize himself in the Second Reich, which is tainted from the beginning with democracy and modernity because of Bismarck's demagogical recourse to plebiscitary approva

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from the bottom of society. On the other hand, Heidegger manages to recognize himself for a while in a movement and a regime that promise to completely reestablish Germany and the world. Later on, he experiences the impossibility of really doing away with modernity, and is forced to take note of the influence that modernity continues to exert, despite everything, even upon Nazi Germany. If Nietzsche considers Prince Otto von Bismarck to be too democratic and modern, Heidegger regards even Rosenberg's speech as contaminated with liberalism and modernity, not to mention the effect that "organization," standardization, industrialization, and uprooting still have on the regime, despite the fact that this very regime was born under the banner of a promise to return to the soil and the roots. Heidegger's disappointment can therefore be understood. Yet, it is a disappointment that never leads to a break with a movement which, despite all of its limits, still continues, following Nietzsche's lead, to condemn modernity. Not only does this movement condemn the most recent manifestations of modernity, but it also condemns its Christian or vetero-testamentary origins, not so much in the government's actions, which were necessarily characterized by a policy of compromise (the Concordat), but in part of the regime's political press.

Once again, in analyzing the history of Heidegger's thought, one stumbles upon a well-known operation: the identification of a proclaimed "non-actuality," and its displacement from the actual political development, with a nonpolitical position. At this point it is not difficult to reduce Heidegger's support of Nazism to a mere accident, and to expunge his radical hostility to liberalism, democracy, and socialism from his criticism of modernity. In this way, his criticism of modernity is reduced to a criticism of calculative thought. And in addition to this, what is completely overlooked is the fact that, for an entire period of time, the alternative to calculative thought was sought in the will to power or in "sacrifice," in a war where the stake appears to have been the "truth of Being." By means of one more oversight or repression, the criticism of calculative thought can be fully identified with a criticism of the will to power and dominion over nature and over man himself. And in this manner Heidegger, too, can become a prophet of postmodernity, a postmodernity perceived under the banner of ecology and technology, the rejection of metaphysical ***reductio ad unum***, and respect for the difference in natural and human reality. What is, of course, forgotten or overlooked is the fact that, during Nazism, and sometimes with an explicit reference to Heidegger, the category of difference or irreducible

uniqueness is synonymous with "struggle," antagonism, and the refutation of the ideal or myth of a reconciled humanity.

These considerations are not intended to deny the theoretical prevalence of Heidegger's thought over the political positions he expresses throughout his life. It is necessary, however, to break free from this dogmatic prejudice, a prejudice that appears to be particularly rooted in the most fervent promoters of the impossible cleansing process we discussed earlier. In order to clarify this methodological problem it might be useful to start by illustrating the cultural and political climate that is manifested in Italy after 1945 (though analogous considerations may be valid also for France and other countries). Eugenio Garin describes it as such: The assumption is that

> the culture which accompanied fascism was not itself fascist. . . . Therefore, fascism remained a non-culture; and, culture was anti-fascism, with the exception of certain thinkers and artists (who were, after all, fascists as well, but only as individuals, not in their doctrines or their poems, sculptures or paintings).[98]

This assumption is, of course, completely groundless, and yet it still continues to be profoundly influential. One significant example: those who accuse Heidegger of compromising himself with the Third Reich—observes an important participant in the debate regarding the philosopher—do not realize that Nazism "was not, in any way or at any time, a current of thought. . . . In fact, one must choose between thinking or killing." And since "in order to kill one must above all not think," this seems to be the proof of Heidegger's complete extraneousness from a movement, "the exterminating power of which lies precisely in the refusal to think."[99] The thinker, the philosopher, the intellectual are, by definition, extraneous to fascism and Nazism. Suspicion is removed from Heidegger by confining his relationship to Nazism to an episode in his private life. The private dimension is regarded as completely removed from theoretical elaboration, and expanded to the point of absorbing the sociopolitical sphere itself. The tautology upon which the hermeneutics of innocence are founded is by now clear: Since culture and fascism are opposing terms, a philosopher can never be a fascist.

A different variation upon the hermeneutics that exalt the immaculate purity of thought insists on the lack of a "necessary" connection between Heidegger's philosophy and his support of Nazism. This formulation of the problem is particularly inappropriate, as it completely

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disregards history. Clearly, there can never be a relation of necessary deduction between two heterogeneous realities such as thought and a concrete sociopolitical movement. But this consideration can be applied to any author, even to the least refined of ideologists: Joseph-Arthur Gobineau, Georges Vacher de Lapouge, Houston Stewart Chamberlain, the theoreticians of social Darwinism and of race, and so on. Strictly speaking, it is impossible to deduce a priori the "final solution" of the Jewish question even from *Mein Kampf*. Between the theoretical formulation and the concrete activation of the gas chambers there are a whole series of unforeseen and unforeseeable events (the failure of the plan to deport all the Jews to Madagascar, the war, the incorporation, through the conquests made eastward, of an even larger number of Jews in the great Reich, and so on). Nevertheless, the gas chambers cannot be understood without taking into account the preceding process of ideological degeneration (the destruction of the universal concept of man) that culminates in *Mein Kampf*, but which is also influenced by the "theoretical" contributions of Gobineau, Vacher de Lapouge, and Chamberlain, not to mention the theoreticians of social Darwinism and of racial struggle. Therefore, the question is not whether there is a relation of necessary deduction between Heidegger's thought and his support of Nazism, but whether the former presents some themes and *motifs* which, in a specific historical situation, will lead to the support of Nazism. And this support of Nazism is not accidental, nor is it merely a private matter, but it has a precise philosophical dimension, as this book has attempted to demonstrate.

Undoubtedly, Heidegger's theories still prevail over his concrete actions, and this is particularly common in the case of great intellectuals. However, this fact does not need to be proven on the basis of a misrepresentation of the historiographical assessment. Only those who still cling to the naive and dogmatic assumption criticized by Garin feel the need to give an antifascist or progressive character to the great figures of conservative or reactionary culture, be it Heidegger, Schmitt, or, before them, Nietzsche.

## 8. Heidegger and His Time

These pages have repeatedly criticized the useless attempt to expunge or repress history. This expunction or repression, however, may certainly

manifest itself in very different forms than those discussed thus far. It may emerge, for example, as moral zeal, which in itself is worthy of praise, but which on a historiographical level is guilty of removing Heidegger's experience from the experience of a whole generation of intellectuals. And moreover, it extirpates some complex cultural phenomena from their international context: for example, Eurocentrism, the dismay when faced with the threat represented by barbarians, anti-Judaism, anti-Semitism, and so on. If the present attempt were to be summarized, one could say that the goal here has been to historicize without relativizing or trifling.

The year 1914 was chosen as our point of departure. This might appear odd, but by now it should be considered as an inevitable starting point: the thesis that perceives the two world wars as two different stages of a gigantic and renewed Thirty Years' War has practically become an *opinio recepta*.[100] Choosing 1914 as a point of departure, the present analysis has focused on what Thomas Mann defines as the *Kriegsideologie*. During the conflict and in different, even opposed manners, this justification, exaltation, and transfiguration of the war rages throughout Europe, but in Germany it has a unique impact. There, in fact, it imbues a large part of German culture and philosophy, and it continues to exert its devastating, embittered, and radicalized influence well after the military defeat in 1918.

The initial issue addressed in the present analysis, therefore, does not deal only with the relationship between a single author and the Third Reich or the National Socialist Party and movement. Rather, it necessarily deals with the relationship between an entire generation of intellectuals and the *Kriegsideologie*, a relationship that later results in Nazism, and one that Nazism itself eventually manages to reclaim and incorporate. It is only by confronting this latter issue that a correct formulation of Heidegger's relationship with Nazism may be provided, as well as a suitable explanation for it. This has been our firm belief, and the reason for our decision to proceed in this manner. Of the intellectuals who massively support the *Kriegsideologie*, only some manage to break away from it, at different times, and more or less radically or strenuously. Only rarely do they manage to formulate a lucid criticism of the ideology they had supported (this is Thomas Mann's case). Others, like Jaspers, continue to be inspired by the *Kriegsideologie* well after 1918, but never go so far as to embrace Nazism. This is not Heidegger's case: Not only does he cross the fatal threshold, but he continues to remain, to the very end, bound to Nazi Germany, despite his contradictory relationship with it, and despite his unceasing and tormented reinterpretation of that relationship.

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## NOTES

1. Cf. F. Fédier's translation of Heidegger's political commentaries of 1933–34 in *Le Débat* 48 (January–February 1988): 178–92; and Alfredo Marini, introduction to his Italian translation of Martin Heidegger, "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten," ("Der Spiegel," May 31, 1976): *Ormai solo un Dio ci può salvare* (Parma, 1987).

2. Cf. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (München, 1939), pp. 420ff, xxv.

3. For example, General Von Reichenau and General Von Mannstein: cf. Hans Dollinger, ed., *Kain, wo ist dein Bruder? Was der Mensch im Zweiten Weltkrieg erleiden mußte, dokumentiert in Tagebüchern und Briefen* (Frankfurt a.M., 1989), p. 102.

4. In Gustavo Sacerdote, ed., *Langenscheidt: Dizionario tascabile delle lingue italiana e tedesca. Parte seconda: Tedesco-Italiano* (Berlin, 1937), p. 390. I owe this information to Professor A. Loinger, to whom I am very grateful.

5. Heidegger, "Nur noch ein Gott."

6. Cf. J. Petzold, *Die Demagogie des Hitlerfaschismus* (Frankfurt a.M., 1983), p. 159.

7. Cf. George L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich* (New York, 1964), pp. 135, 193–94.

8. Martin Heidegger, "Abraham a Sankta Clara" (1910), in *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt: 1980), vol. 13, p. 2.

9. In a text of 1895 published in the journal *Die Hilfe* and reprinted in Petzold, *Die Demagogie*, pp. 33ff.

10. F. Naumann, "Mitteleuropa" (1915), in *Europastrategien des deutschen Kapitals 1900-1945*, ed. Reinhard Opitz (Köln, 1977), p. 346.

11. Ibid., pp. 344ff.

12. Ibid., pp. 337ff, 341, 355–57.

13. Cf. Petzold, *Die Demagogie*, pp. 35, 191.

14. F. Naumann, "Demokratie und Kaisertum" (1900), and "Das Ideal der Freiheit" (1908), reprinted in Opitz, *Europastrategien*, pp. 169–72.

15. Marini, in the Italian translation of Heidegger, *Nur noch ein Gott*, p. 109 n. 2.

16. Lukács speaks of an "often very interesting" analysis, or he draws attention to the "most vigorous and suggestive part of *Sein und Zeit*": cf. György Lukács, *Die Zerstörung der Vernunft* (Berlin, 1954), p. 397–98. With reference to this, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Lukács e la distruzione della ragione," in *György Lukács nel centenario della nascita*, eds. Domenico Losurdo, P. Salvucci and Livio Sichirollo (Urbino, 1986), pp. 157ff.

17. Karl Löwith, "M. Heidegger und F. Rosenzweig. Ein Nachtrag zu *Sein und Zeit*" (1942–43), in *Sämtliche Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1984), vol. 8, pp. 72–101.

18. Franz Rosenzweig, "Der Stern der Erlösung," in *Franz Rosenzweig Der Mensch und Sein Werk*, 4th ed. (Den Haag, 1976), p. 3–24.

19. A letter by A. Salomon dated July 22, 1915, in György Lukács, *Epistolario 1902–1917*, eds. Éva Karádi and Éva Fekete (Rome, 1984), p. 365.

20. Cf. Gershom Scholem, *Von Berlin nach Jerusalem* (1977).

21. Rosenzweig, "Der Stern der Erlösung," p. 3.

22. Ibid., p. 3–5.

23. A letter to P. Ernst, dated August 2, 1915, in Lukács, *Epistolario*, p. 366.

24. Rosenzweig, "Der Stern der Erlösung," p. 337.

25. Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (Amsterdam, 1947), p. 54.

26. Ibid., p. 60.

27. Ibid., p. 7.

28. Ibid., p. 9.

29. Ibid., p. 7.

30. With regard to this, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Le catene e i fiori: La critica dell'ideologia tra Marx e Nietzsche," *Hermeneutica* 6 (1986): 87ff, 114ff.

31. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p. 60.

32. Ibid., pp. 126, 204.

33. Ibid., p. 203.

34. Max Horkheimer, *Egoismus und Freiheitsbewegung (Zur Anthropologie des bürgerlichen Zeitalters)* (1936).

35. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, pp. 16, 37.

36. In particular, Jacob L. Talmon, *The Origin of Totalitarian Democracy* (1952).

37. Domenico Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel* (Milano: Guerini e associati, 1987), in particular pp. 133–45.

38. Theodor W. Adorno, "Beitrag zur Ideologienlehre," in *Ideologie-Wissenschaft-Gesellschaft: Neuere Beiträge zur Diskussion*, ed. Hans J. Lieber (Darmstadt, 1976), pp. 283ff.

39. Theodor W. Adorno, *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit: Zur deutschen Ideologie* (Frankfurt a.M., 1965).

40. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, p.66.

41. Ibid., p. 71.

42. Ibid., p. 106.

43. With regard to this, cf. Domenico Losurdo, "Marx e la storia del totalitarismo," *Storia e problemi contemporanei* 6 (1990): 41–61.

44. Karl Marx, "Das Kapital," in Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Werke* (Berlin, 1955), vol. 23, p. 779.

45. Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften, und die transzendentale Phänomenologie*, ed. W. Biemel, *Husserliana*, vol. 6 (Den Haag 1954), p. 8

46. Edmund Husserl, "Formale Typen der Kultur in der Menschheit·

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sent-Wicklung," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze (1922–1937)* (Tübingen, 1954), pp. 89ff.

47. Edmund Husserl, ["Kirche und christliche Wissenschaft"] (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 104.

48. Edmund Husserl, "Phänomenologie und Anthropologie" (1931), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 169.

49. Edmund Husserl, ["Die neuzeitliche Kultur als Kultur aus praktischer Verfunft"] (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, pp. 108ff.

50. Edmund Husserl, ["Zum Versagen der neuzeitlichen Kultur- und Wissenschaftsentwicklung, das Telos der europäischen Menschheit zu verwirklichen"] (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 121.

51. Edmund Husserl, "Zur Unterschrift unter Kastors Bild" (1935), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 239.

52. Husserl, ["Zum Versagen"], pp. 121ff.

53. Edmund Husserl, ["Zur Idee absoluter Rechtfertigung"] (1922–23), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 105.

54. Edmund Husserl, "An den Präsidenten des VIII Internationalen Philosophenkongresses Herrn Prof. Dr. Rádl in Prag," in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 243.

55. Cf. above all Edmund Husserl, "Erneuerung, Ihr Problem und ihre Methode," in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 3.

56. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften*, p. 4.

57. Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, pp. 38ff.

58. Edmund Husserl, ["Der neuzeitliche Rationalismus erfüllt nicht den Ursprungssinn der Rationalität"] (1934), in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922–1937)*, p. 237.

59. Benedetto Croce, "Fatti politici e interpretazioni storiche" (1924), in *Cultura e vita morale*, 2d ed. (Bari, 1926), p. 270.

60. Cf. Henri Guillemin, *Benjamin Constant muscadin, 1795–1799* (Paris, 1958), pp. 275–79.

61. With regard to this, cf. Losurdo, *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel*, pp. 115–21.

62. Printed in Jader Jacobelli, *Croce-Gentile: Dal sodalizio al dramma* (Milano, 1989), pp. 140ff.

63. This is the direction followed by Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Road to Serfdom* (London, 1986), p. 16. The same path is followed by Lucio Colletti, "L'equivoco di Lukács," *Mondoperaio* (January 1986): 99–103. It should be added, however, that Hayek himself later echoes some themes dear to German *Kulturkritik*, as will be discussed later in this paragraph.

64. Adam Müller, "Deutsche Wissenschaft und Literatur" (1806), in *Kritische, ästhetische und philosophische Schriften*, eds. Walter Schroeder and Werner Siebert (Neuwied-Berlin, 1967), vol. 1, pp. 101ff.

65. Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France" (1790), in

*The Works: A New Edition* (London, 1826), vol. 5, p. 184. (As for the German translation, see Edmund Burke, *Betrachtungen über die französische Revolution. In der deutschen Übersetzung von Friedrich Gentz* [Frankfurt a.M., 1967], p. 160). This aspect of the history of the term *Gemeinschaft* was already highlighted by Eugene Lerch, " 'Gesellschaft' und 'Gemeinschaft,' " *Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 22 (1944): 114ff. Lerch, who sees Burke as the point of departure for the history of the term *Gemeinschaft*, does not hesitate to establish a line of continuity which reaches the "community of the front" (*Frontgemeinschaft*) of the "First World War" and "National-Socialism" (ibid., p. 117). It is interesting to note that also the genesis of another fundamental category of German conservative or reactionary tradition seems to refer back, if not to British sources, to England's political model: In 1860, Rudolf Haym contrasts France's "bloody and destructive" revolution to "the peaceful, conservative revolution" (*die friedliche, die konservative Revolution*); cf. Rudolf Haym, "Thomas Babington Macaulay," in *Preußische Jahrbücher* 6 (1860): As for the constant reference to England made by German conservatism, from the years of the struggle against the French Revolution up to the decades following the failure of the 1848 Revolution, cf. Domenico Losurdo, *Hegel und das deutsche Erbe: Philosophie und nationale Frage Zwischen Revolution und Reaktion* (Köln: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, 1989), chap. 5, §§ 3ff.; *Tra Hegel e Bismarck. La Rivoluzione del 1848 e la crisi della cultura tedesca* (Roma, 1983), pp. 71–86; *La catastrofe della Germania e l'immagine di Hegel*, pp. 17–28.

66. Edmund Burke, "Speech on Moving his Resolutions for Conciliation with America" (1775), in *The Works*, vol. 3, p. 81.

67. Burke, "Reflections," pp. 183ff.

68. Edmund Burke, "Letters on a Regicide Peace, III" (1797), in *The Works*, vol. 8, p. 400.

69. Cf. Benjamin Constant, "Principes de politique," in *Oeuvres*, ed. A. Roulin (Paris, 1957), p. 1151; George Washington, "Fragments of the Discarded First Inaugural Address" (1789), in *A Collection*, ed. William B. Allen (Indianapolis, 1988), p. 455.

70. Burke, "Reflections," pp. 149ff.

71. Friedrich Schlegel, "Zur österreichischen Geschichte" (1807), in *Schriften und Fragmente*, ed. Ernst Behler (Stuttgart, 1956), p. 321.

72. Friedrich Schlegel, "Signatur des Zeitalters" (1823), in *Concordia*, ed. Ernst Behler (Darmstadt, 1967), pp. 354, 180, 64.

73. Burke, "Reflections," p. 152.

74. A letter to an unknown addressee dated January 1790, in Alfred Cobban and Robert A. Smith, eds., *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* (Cambridge, 1967), vol. 6, p. 80.

75. Friedrich J. Stahl, *Die Philosophie des Rechts*, 5th ed. (Darmstadt 1963), vol. 1, p. 555.

76. Cf. Losurdo, "La Révolution française a-t-elle échoué?"; "Vincenzo Cuoco, la Rivoluzione napoletana del 1799 e la comparatistica delle rivoluzioni."

77. Burke is "great and far-sighted" and his formulation of liberal theory is "wonderful": these assertions are expressed by Friedrich A. von Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* (Chicago, 1973).

78. Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty* (Chicago, 1960), pp. 56, 92.

79. Friedrich A. von Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science: Studies on the Abuse of Reason* (Glencoe, 1952), pp. 91, 203, 196.

80. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, vol. 1, p. 21.

81. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, p. 14.

82. Ibid., p. 203.

83. Friedrich A. von Hayek, *New Studies on Philosophy, Politics, Economy and the History of Ideas* (1978), p. 255.

84. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, p. 10.

85. Hans G. Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, 4th ed. (Tübingen, 1975), pp. 257, 261–69.

86. Hayek, *New Studies*, pp. 4, 10.

87. Burke, "Letters on a Regicide Peace, III," p. 400.

88. Gadamer, *Warheit und Methode*, p. 265.

89. Hayek, *Law, Legislation and Liberty*, pp. 104, 105.

90. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, p. 5.

91. Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy? and Other Studies* (Glencoe, 1959); with regard to this, cf. Pier Franco Taboni, "Leo Strauss e il governo dei migliori," in *Hermeneutica*, (1986): 145–92.

92. Heidegger, "Abraham a Sancta Clara," pp. 2ff.

93. Martin Heidegger, *Die Selbstbehauptung der deutschen Universität* (Frankfurt, 1983), pp. 12ff.

94. Martin Heidegger, "Die Kategorien- und Bedeutungslehre des Duns Scotus" (1916), in *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 1, p. 199.

95. For this interpretation of Nietzsche, which is presented without making direct reference to his texts, cf. the previously cited essays: "Le catene e i fiori. La critica dell'ideologia tra Marx e Nietzsche" and "Nietzsche, il moderno e la tradizione liberale."

96. In a letter to his friend Georg Brandes, who defines Nietzsche's position as an "aristocratic radicalism," Nietzsche responds that it is an "excellent" definition and indeed, "the most intelligent word I have read about me so far" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe*, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari [Berlin–New York, 1986], vol. 8, p. 206); with regard to this, cf. Michele Martelli, *Nietzsche "inattuale"* (Urbino, 1988), pp. 20–27.

97. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Die Geburt der Tragödie. Versuch einer Selb-

stkritik" (1886), in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (München-Berlin–New York), vol. 1, p. 20.

98. Eugenio Garin, *Cronache di filosofia italiana* (Bari, 1966), p. 518.

99. Henri Crétella, "Heidegger contre le nazisme," *Le Débat* 48 (1988): p. 124.

100. Cf. in particular, Arno J. Mayer's book, *Why Did the Heavens not Darken?* (1988).

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